



TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Monday, 22 March 2021 at 7.00 pm. The meeting will be held virtually and webcast live through the Council's website in accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (S.I.2020 No. 392).

The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

RAY MORGAN
Chief Executive

NOTE: Filming Council Meetings

Please note the meeting will be filmed and will be broadcast live and subsequently as an archive on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk). The images and sound recording will also be used for training purposes within the Council. By joining the meeting remotely, you are consenting to being filmed.

AGENDA

PART I - PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

Part I - Press and Public Present

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 February 2021 as published.

3 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (Pages 11 - 20)

To review and outstanding items from the previous minutes, including:

- Follow up from the Scrutiny Officer Job Descriptions
- Freedom of Information Request Referrals (OSC21-011)
- Task Groups final version of their Terms of References

4 Urgent Business

To consider any business that the Chairman rules may be dealt with under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

5 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

Matters for Scrutiny

6 Safer Woking Partnership Plan (Report to follow - OSC21-010)

Reporting Person: Camilla Edmiston

7 Family Centres Update

Reporting Person: Adam Thomas / Nicola Norman

Matters for Determination

8 Climate Change Emergency Report OSC21-006 (Pages 21 - 46)

Reporting Person: Lara Beattie

9 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee OSC21-009 (Pages 47 - 66)

Reporting Person: Councillor D Hughes

10 Work Programme OSC21-008 (Pages 67 - 84)

Reporting person: Councillor D Hughes

Performance Management

11 Performance and Financial Monitoring Information

To consider the current publication of the Performance & Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book). Members are asked to bring their copy of the Green Book to the meeting.

Reporting person: Councillor D Hughes

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published - 10 March 2021

For further information regarding this agenda and arrangements for the meeting, please contact Hanna Taylor, Democratic Services Officer, Ext 3056, Email Hanna.Taylor@woking.gov.uk



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MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 22 February 2021

Present:

Cllr D E Hughes (Chair)
Cllr M A Whitehand (Vice-Chair)

Cllr D J Bittleston	Cllr J E Bond
Cllr S Hussain	Cllr G G Chrystie
Cllr R Mohammed	Cllr J R Sanderson
Cllr M I Raja	

Also Present: Jon Herbert (Strategic Housing and Development Manager), Jo McIntosh (WBC Solicitor), Louise Strongitharm (Director of Housing) and Councillor D Harlow.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday, 25 January 2021 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman highlighted that the empty homes list was still outstanding, due to GDPR compliance and suggested putting a timeframe on this action.

It was confirmed that the Kornferry training would be made available for opposition groups in the future, but had been delayed due to Covid-19.

Following the Play Area item that was at the previous meeting of the committee, held on 25 January, where the Loop Road Project was covered in detail. The Chairman advised that the Loop Road consultation was now live on the Council's website.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to discuss.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

6. HOUSING TOPIC SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Chairman introduced the Housing Topic Scrutiny Review Report, and thanked officers and members for their input on the report, at previous meetings and the viability case study group. The recommendations set out in the paper link with the wider strategies and policies of the Housing department.

Paragraph 6.14, point A) states 'it was suggested that Planning Committee members receive training in understanding the viability argument process', which had been conducted by an independent organisation and was available for all members. Members advised that the briefing provided insight into how the viability process works which can then be applied when making future decisions.

The Chairman noted that recommendation (vii) was not a proper recommendation, and after discussions with the legal team, and support from members it was removed.

More detail on the viability case study work was discussed, and that the target of 35% affordable homes for developments in the town centre was difficult to achieve, which would have a knock on effect for HIF figures. The target of affordable housing was more likely to be reached if builds were on green belt land, however that came with other implications and concerns. Other options were raised in order to reach the target such as bringing empty homes back into use and developing sites that had been identified through HIF.

The 'Earn your Deposit' scheme was referenced in the report, which was a scheme for Thamesway tenants, these social and affordable housing numbers from the scheme may not be included in the figures as some were based outside of Woking, in locations such as Pirbright and Guildford. It was unclear whether these figures were reported in the Green Book, and would be confirmed outside of the meeting. It was suggested that as Thamesway assisted with the Council's work on affordable homes and were leading on the Sheerwater Regeneration, they should be mentioned in the report. Historically, government had funded affordable housing projects when deemed a priority.

The Housing Portfolio Holder advised that it would be appropriate for the report to go back to the Housing Task Group for final scrutiny and review of recommendations, before going to Council.

The complexities and reasons as to why homes may be empty were raised, and the aspiration of occupying the empty properties can take a long period of time. Officers resources had been redirected during the pandemic, however work had begun on this project again, with results detailed in the Green Book. Ms Strongitharm added that the properties brought back into use did not usually impact the numbers of the affordable housing supply.

Members were encouraged to advise the Housing team of any empty properties, which brought the conversation back to the list of empty properties that was mentioned at the beginning of the meeting. It was agreed that no personal details would be made available and the list would only hold the addresses of the empty properties. Councillors were reminded that the information would be highly confidential.

RESOLVED that

- (i) recommendation (vii) be removed; and

- (ii) the report be reviewed by the Housing Task Group and the subsequent recommendations to be presented to Council.

The committee then moved to agenda item 8.

7. WOKING FOOTBALL CLUB & ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOW UP

The Chairman introduced the item, which followed up on the findings of the Independent Review by Dr Gifty Edila and conclusion of the Woking Football Club & Associated Developments Task Groups work. She highlighted the important role of this Committee in undertaking a scrutiny function to provide assurance to residents and fellow members regarding the processes behind the decisions of the Council. This item was to allow discussion on the recommendations within Dr Edila's report which refer specifically to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Independent report confirmed that the task groups focus was on the processes that lead to the decision and not the scrutiny of the Planning application. It was highlighted that there was an error in the report as there were only two members who sat on the task group and were also on the Planning Committee at the time, not four as mentioned in the report. The Committee welcomed suggestions for how effective scrutiny can be improved in future.

Members welcomed the recommendation for the Council to create a Scrutiny Officer position, to assist the Committee with research, report writing and the Work Programme. The Chairman advised that the Woking Football Club & Associated Developments Task Group was the first piece of scrutiny undertaken of this size, it was a learning curve for all involved and someone with a specialised skill set and time allocated to the work would have relieved the pressure from members who also have other commitments. The role would also be able to assist with consultations, surveys and pulling documents together for review etc. It was felt that that the job descriptions were over qualified and a part-time position would be beneficial.

Dr Edila reported that 'the Task Group performed expeditiously with admirable skill in reviewing the project' and fully endorsed and added to the Task Group's recommendations. She added other elements that would be helpful in future, which included;

1. Chair to contact the Chair of WFC post the review. Action completed and two way communication has been established.
2. Although the task group was commended for its report, in future, enhanced clarity over the declarations of interest would be helpful for transparency.
3. Again the Independent review found that the Task Group did not look at the importance or relevance of the project itself and whether the development should be supported. It was suggested that if any scrutiny were to take place into a project that could result in a planning application, would only allow members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Planning Committee to sit on as witnesses.
4. Funding should be available for the Committee to assist with effective scrutiny. For example to purchase external expert advice.

Member training was also discussed, as it was greatly impacted by Covid-19, it was felt that training for their appropriate committee's was vital and the importance of ensuring Planning Committee members were up to date with the latest legislation was stressed. Previously the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received training from South East Employers which members praised and the Chairman suggested holding biannual training

for members of the committee. Also, whether the number of attendees for the committee should be increased to allow more support to task and finish groups to scrutinise particular items.

There was a typing error for Cllr Whitehand's name, which was pointed out under point 6.1 in the report.

The Chairman thanked members for the work and support on the report. It was agreed that members would feedback any comments on the job descriptions to the Chairman by Monday, 1 March 2021.

8. OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED ANNUAL UPDATE

Jo McIntosh, introduced the annual report that detailed the overview of complaints received and noted that there had been 64 formal complaints for 2020. An outline summary of the details of the complaints was included in the report, NVH also provided details for their complaints and Ms McIntosh advised that the admission in paragraph 4.2, should read as five cases that reached the appeal stage.

It was explained that the Council recently undertook a review of the complaints system, which resulted in minor amendments, one being that a response would need to be sent within 20 working days as opposed to 60 working days previously, which follows the Ombudsman's recommendation. The system had been fully audited within the last year. Members praised the fact that the timeframe of responses had been reduced.

To clarify, it was explained that once a NVH complaint had been through the NVH complaints system, then the complainer can make a complaint to Woking Borough Council, which would be seen by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, and therefore included in WBC's data.

Findings by the Ombudsman's were reported by Peter Bryant to the Standards and Audit Committee, and not included in the report, however it was pointed out that the report is available to members. Members would like to see the report that goes to the Standards and Audit Committee, and therefore would be circulated as a background paper to committee members when finalised. The Chair advised that when the report is written for next year (reviewing 2021) it would include a short summary of those complaints that went to the higher level. It was noted that it would be useful to see comparative data from previous years, which would be distributed after the meeting. If further information was required from NVH, it would be worth considering inviting them to the committee to provide more detail.

The classifications were historic, to allow year on year comparison, and the Chairman questioned whether the 'other' category could be sorted to see whether there were any further areas of concern that could be highlighted. The 'other' category was the largest one and trends within this would be of interest to the committee. The complaints against staff tended to be focused on teams that dealt with enforcement such as parking, and as each complaint was different it was difficult to group them at times.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The committee then went to item 7.

9. ANNUAL FOI REPORT

The Annual Freedom of Information (FOI) Report was introduced, which included comparative data year on year, the total number of breached and refused FOI's and the total number of FOI's broken down by month and department. The system is fully auditable and members were welcomed to view the system at any time via the Democratic Services Team.

The high number of FOI's received by the Environmental Health team was discussed and it was noted that that department would have been allocated the FOI's relating to Covid-19, on top of their usual ones. It was explained that the Democratic Services team log and allocate the FOI's to other departments and therefore it would be quicker for the requester, if when logged, the FOI was dealt with by the Democratic Services team if the information was better sourced from another organisation. The Chairman requested more detail on the FOI's that were referred to other organisations and again, whether there were any trends in the categories covered.

The number of breached FOI's was notably higher due to Covid-19, and Ms McIntosh explained the process and implications of the breached requests. It was a priority to respond to FOI's within the 20 working day timeframe, however where this did not occur, requesters would be kept informed of progress made and officers would aim to respond as soon as possible. During the pandemic, it was communicated that responding to FOI's would not be a priority service.

The positive reduction in refused requests was highlighted, which may be due to a lot of the commercially sensitive Part II items from last year were now made available to the public. There is a high number of FOI's submitted from reports and students and therefore depending on their subject can affect the type of responses provided.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed the Work Programme, and noted there were no changes however members were encouraged to make the Chairman aware of any topic suggestions for the next municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

11. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The Committee had received the December Green Book, and noted the increase in empty homes brought back into use and in Fly-tipping issues as well.

Members praised officers for the work they had undertaken during the pandemic, which included surge testing in two areas. The low number of sick days taken by Council employees, even during the pandemic was highlighted.

The CMG overspend that was raised at the previous meeting, had been picked up by the Chairman, and after liaising with the Head of HR it was explained that covered the recruitment costs for the new Chief Executive Officer and Director of Planning and the LGA graduate programme.

The KPI's reported in the Green Book for Joint Waste, were looking to be amended as members felt they were not the most appropriate indicators to highlight trends or areas of concern. The Chairman had liaised with Cllr Davis, as he is the portfolio holder of this area, and a decision regarding the revised KPI's should be reported to the next committee meeting on 22 March 2021.

12. TASK GROUP UPDATES

There were no task group updates for the Committee to receive.

13. TASK GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

The Terms of Reference for the Housing Task Group (HTG) and Economic Development Task Group (EDTG) were received by the committee. The Finance Task Group (FTG) draft Terms of Reference would be circulated to the committee.

The FTG had already reviewed their terms of reference which already included detail on the scrutiny function and had regularly provided feedback to the Committee. The Chairman raised the question as to whether the HTG and EDTG were undergoing scrutiny work or whether they were acting as standing task groups, in which case they may not be reporting to the most appropriate committee. Any changes to the task groups reporting would need to be approved by Full Council and amended in the Constitution. The final decision from the Committee would then be raised at the Executive meeting scheduled for 25 March and Council on 8 April 2021, and any changes would be implemented for the 21/22 municipal year.

The history of the task groups were discussed, and whether these standing task groups provided any scrutiny function. National guidance indicates that groups reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have a scrutiny function. The Chairman of both task groups, Cllr I Johnson, advised that the Executive had previously instructed the groups to report back to the committee. The task groups provided scrutiny by reviewing performance and measuring it against the strategy, whilst supporting officers and working on policies. Cllr Johnson believed it was worth reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure members were aware of current topics, positive news and also challenges.

The EDTG has liaised with Simon Matthew Associates on the programme and scrutinised the reports themselves, there had been nothing the task group had needed the committee assistance on recently. The Chairman suggested to add a line to the EDTG draft terms of reference saying "identification of scrutiny within the task group would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee".

The HTG had been a standing task group since 2005, and the function had changed over the years, the group were now focused on developing and monitoring strategies and policies. The group covered various topics such as empty homes, NVH contract,

affordable housing, and would inform members of items they feel they should be made aware of. Task Groups reports are provided to the committee, and if the committee felt that matters required further scrutiny the task group would assist. The Chairman also requested that a line be added to the draft terms of reference to define the link between the task group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to reflect the scrutiny function.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 9.30 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2021

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST - REFERRALS

Executive Summary

At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 February 2021, the Chairman requested further information on the breakdown of the Freedom of Information Requests (FOI's) that are referred to other organisations in 2020.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: OSC21-005 FOI Report 2021

Reporting Person: Hanna Taylor, Democratic Services Officer
Email: hanna.taylor@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3056

Contact Person: Hanna Taylor, Democratic Services Officer
Email: hanna.taylor@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3056

Date Published: 12 March 2021

1.0 Breakdown of Requests that were referred.

1.1 When an applicant submits an FOI request, there are multiple templates to assist officers with a response. One of the response templates sets out that the information is held with another organisation. Members were interested to see a breakdown of the type of FOI's that were referred to other organisations. In 2020 there were 84 FOI's referred to other organisations.

1.2 The table below shows a breakdown by department:

FOI Subject	Total
Adult Learning / social care	11
Asylum seekers	2
Care support	23
Childcare and families	3
Children's Social Care	12
Flooding	1
Healthcare	1
McLaren	1
Roads	6
Schools	11
Transport	11
Waste	1
Social care	1

1.3 The table shows the subject of the FOI's submitted, month of request, and which organisation the FOI was referred on to:

FOI Details	Month submitted	Referred to
Adult learning / social care Framework	January	Surrey County Council
Changes to Day Services for Adults with a Learning Disability	January	Surrey County Council
Specialist Supported Housing - Costs and Numbers	January	Surrey County Council
Care home data	January	Surrey County Council
Link care	January	Surrey County Council
Blue Badges scheme	January	Surrey County Council
Local Welfare Assistance	January	Surrey County Council
Social services - personal information	January	Surrey County Council
Children in Care	January	Surrey County Council
STI Testing Services	January	Public Health England
Road maintenance and street lighting	January	Surrey County Council
Private special needs schools	January	Surrey County Council
Children & Adult Services	January	Surrey County Council
Rubbish Tips	January	Surrey County Council
Financial assistance for vulnerable adults	February	Surrey County Council
Assaults on Teachers by Students	February	Surrey County Council

Freedom of Information Request - Referrals

Arrangements for Independent Advocacy	February	Surrey County Council
Aftercare Fees	February	Surrey County Council
Care leave offer	February	Surrey County Council
Disabled Facilities Grants	February	Surrey County Council
Children in care	February	Surrey County Council
Positions of Trust	February	Surrey County Council
Road maintenance costs	February	Surrey County Council
Potholes - compensation/payments for damaged vehicles	February	Surrey County Council
Good and outstanding schools	February	Surrey County Council
Research enquiry - on treatment for co-occurring serious mental health and alcohol / drug issues	March	Surrey County Council
Suicide prevention measures	March	Surrey County Council
Support for children	March	Surrey County Council
Housing & Social Care for 16/17 year olds	March	Surrey County Council
Potholes - reported and repairs	March	Surrey County Council
Education Psychologists	March	Surrey County Council
Admissions data	March	Surrey County Council
Adult learning / social care - Assistant Technology	April	Surrey County Council
Breastfeeding support services	April	Surrey County Council
Bus Transport management	April	Surrey County Council
Adult learning / social care - financial assessment	May	Surrey County Council
Emergency Funding for care homes during Covid-19	May	Surrey County Council
Emails between Care home providers Covid-19	May	Surrey County Council
Care & Support - Financial Assessments during Covid-19	May	Surrey County Council
Care Quality Commission - COVID-19	May	Surrey County Council
Care payments	May	Surrey County Council
Care service user contracts	May	Surrey County Council
Cyclists	May	Surrey County Council
Council Funding for Social Workers and Care Homes for Children in Care	June	Surrey County Council
Care	June	Surrey County Council
Care	June	Surrey County Council
Fixed Penalty Notices - Speeding	June	Surrey Police
Bus Lanes	June	Surrey County Council
Live in Care	July	Surrey County Council
Blue Badge Holders	July	Surrey County Council
Adoption Records	July	Surrey County Council
SEN Children	July	Surrey County Council
Children in Care	July	Surrey County Council
McLaren Technology Centre	July	McLaren Technology centre

Freedom of Information Request - Referrals

Community Equipment	August	Surrey County Council
Foster Placement	September	Surrey County Council
Specifications for Street Lighting	September	Surrey County Council
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards 2019 and 2020	October	Surrey County Council
CIL Management Consultants	October	Surrey County Council
The National Transfer Scheme	October	Surrey County Council
ASC funding - Infection Control Fraud in care homes	October	Surrey County Council
Care homes	October	Surrey County Council
Covid in care homes	October	Surrey County Council
Rive Ditch Flooding	October	Surrey County Council
Potholes	October	Surrey County Council
LA's Education Scrutiny Committee	October	Surrey County Council
Winter Gritting	October	Surrey County Council
Traffic calming measures	October	Surrey County Council
Definitive Statement of Public Rights of Way	October	Surrey County Council
Supported Bus Services	October	Surrey County Council
NEET Young adults	November	Surrey County Council
Looked-After Children	November	Surrey County Council
Protocol to reduce the Criminalisation of Children in Care	November	Surrey County Council
Funding for Services to Young People	November	Surrey County Council
Racism in Local Schools	November	Surrey County Council
Admissions	November	Surrey County Council
Public Health in your Authority / Schools	November	Surrey County Council
Cycle lanes	November	Surrey County Council
Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods	November	Surrey County Council
Unaccompanied under-age asylum seekers (UUAS)	December	Surrey County Council
SEN Mediation Provider Details	December	Surrey County Council
School Bullying and Racism	December	Surrey County Council
Referrals to Children's Social Care from Schools	December	Surrey County Council
Bus real time	December	Surrey County Council

REPORT ENDS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK GROUP

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

ADOPTED:



The Economic Regeneration Task Group was formed on 30 March 2009. The name of the task group was changed to the Economic Development Task Group on 6 April 2017.

Membership

The Economic Development Task Group shall comprise seven Members of the Council representing all Groups on the Council based on proportionality. The Elected Members to be appointed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May. The Portfolio Holder for Promoting the Local Economy shall be an ex-officio member.

Members of the Task Group will be expected to gain the views of Councillors/ Officers/ other representatives with a view to reporting those views to the Task Group.

Members of the Task Group may also be charged with specific areas to research and report back on to the Task Group.

Members of the Task Group may be expected to present proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, prepare written reports.

Substitutes may be appointed when necessary.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The election of Chairman and appointment of Vice-Chairman will take place annually at the first meeting of the Economic Development Task Group. The Chairman shall be a member of the opposition.

Remit

To promote a thriving and growing local economy in Woking, while ensuring that residents, community groups and businesses feature in a high quality environment that continues to be an attractive and healthy place to live in, work in and visit.

- To review and monitor the current Economic Strategy of the Council.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer matters to the task group for further scrutiny and consideration and vice versa.

Reporting

The members of the Task Group will be responsible for reporting on a regular basis to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any proposals arising from the work of the Task Group will need to be reported to the Council's Executive, normally following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings of the Economic Development Task Group

The Economic Development Task Group will be serviced by Democratic Services.

The Economic Development Task Group will have 2 regular scheduled meetings which will be held in private.

The Economic Development Task Group will have Agendas for, and Minutes of, its meetings. These will be made available to all Members of the Task Group on a confidential basis.

Terms of Reference and Meeting Management Protocol

Draft Minutes will be issued within five working days of a meeting of the Economic Development Task Group, which will be approved, or amended and approved, at the next meeting of the Economic Development Task Group.

HOUSING TASK GROUP
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE



ADOPTED: XX XXX XXXXX

The Housing Task Group was formed on 12 September 2005.

Membership

The Housing Task Group shall comprise seven Members of the Council representing all Groups on the Council based on proportionality. The Elected Members to be appointed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May.

Members of the Task Group will be expected to gain the views of Councillors/ Officers/ Portfolio Holder / External Advisors and other representatives with a view to reporting those views to the Task Group.

Members of the Task Group may also be charged with specific areas to research and report back on to the Task Group. Any investigation requiring funding would normally be expected to be part of the existing housing budget. Offsite visits will be ad hoc. Requests for additional funds for the purpose would be submitted to the Portfolio Holder.

Members of the Task Group may be expected to present proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, prepare written reports.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The election of Chairman and appointment of Vice-Chairman will take place annually at the first meeting of the Housing Task Group. The Chairman shall be a member of the opposition.

Remit

The Task Group will cover the following:

- Steer development, and monitor implementation, of strategies and policies to provide, in particular, affordable housing availability (based on housing needs), reduction of homelessness, improving housing conditions, management and maintenance of Council homes and linkages with social care provision.
- Monitor performance and the delivery of key housing projects.
- Any other topics are to be considered as suggested by the task group, officers or other council bodies. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer matters to the task group for further scrutiny and consideration and vice versa.

This is a standing task group.

Reporting

The members of the Task Group will be responsible for reporting on a regular basis to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any proposals arising from the work of the Task Group will need to be reported to the Council's Executive normally following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings of the Housing Task Group

The Housing Task Group will be serviced by Democratic Services.

The Housing Task Group will meet 4 times a year, depending on workloads and adhoc issues arising. The meetings will be held in private.

Terms of Reference and Meeting Management Protocol

The Housing Task Group will have Agendas for, and Minutes of, its meetings. These will be made available to all Members of the Task Group on a confidential basis.

Draft Minutes will be issued within five working days of a meeting of the Housing Task Group, which will be approved, or amended and approved, at the next meeting of the Housing Task Group.

FINANCE TASK GROUP
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE



ADOPTED: XX XXX XXXXX

The Finance Task Group was formed on 12 September 2005.

Membership

The Finance Task Group shall comprise seven Members of the Council based on proportionality. The Elected Members are to be appointed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman will take place annually at the first meeting of the Task Group after the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has taken place.

Remit

The Task Group has been established as a Standing Task Group to review financial issues as identified either by itself or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task Group will receive financial information, including reports to the Executive, to enable it to undertake effective scrutiny of the financial performance of the Council.

The Task Group will receive reports on areas such as Treasury Management, Budget Process and Financial Forecast, Statement of Accounts, Investment Programme, Review of Fees and Charges, General Fund Budget, Update on Commercial Rents, Update on Irrecoverable Debt, and matters arising from the Green Book. Its Work Programme will be received at each Task Group meeting.

Reporting

The members of the Task Group will be responsible for reporting on a regular basis to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any proposals arising from the work of the Task Group will need to be reported to the Council's Executive, normally following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings of the Finance Task Group

The Task Group will be attended by the Finance Director (S151 Officer) and the Financial Services Manager, with other officers invited as required.

It will be serviced by Democratic Services and meet around five times a year, depending on workloads and ad hoc issues arising. The agenda pack for the meetings of the Task Group will be made available on mod.gov and emailed to Members of the Task Group in advance of the meeting. The meetings will be held in private and minuted.

The dates of the meetings for the forthcoming Municipal Year will be received as part of the Work Programme at its meeting in March or April each year.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2021

CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

Executive Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the Council's climate change activities, highlighting in particular work undertaken since it declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019.

To set this in context, this report begins by setting out the key milestones in the Council's climate change and sustainability timeline and the motions that set the declaration and subsequent activities in train.

The report then goes on to highlight work undertaken since July 2019 as well as outlining future projects and plans.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the activities undertaken to date and those planned in furtherance of the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration, be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.
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Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Lara Beattie, Senior Policy Officer
Email: lara.beattie@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3013

Contact Person: Lara Beattie, Senior Policy Officer
Email: lara.beattie@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3013

Date Published: 12March 2021

1.0 Introduction, background and timeline

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council has long been committed to protecting the environment. Its first climate change strategy was adopted in 2002, although activities in this area began much earlier in 1990. A timeline of activities is available on the Council's website at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-change-and-sustainability-timeline and is presented in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 There are two key strategy documents that underpin activities in this area. Woking 2050 is the borough's current climate change strategy, adopted in 2015. This sets out a vision guiding our collective efforts to create a sustainable borough by reducing our impact on the environment. The significance of the year 2050 used in the strategy's title is tied to the national legislation in place at the time of its adoption. The UK's Climate Change Act sought to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 on the 1990 baseline. This was adopted as a local target at the time of the last revision of the Climate Change Strategy (September 2015). This national target has now been superseded by a pledge to reach net zero by 2050, which has also been adopted locally as part of the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration. A future update of Woking 2050 will reflect this, as well as other actions that have been developed as part of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, which is outlined in section 2 of this report.
- 1.3 Complementing Woking 2050, is the Natural Woking strategy (adopted in 2016), which is the Council's equivalent strategy for biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy for the area. It sets out how we intend to enhance the provision and accessibility of green spaces, conserve existing biodiversity and habitats and create opportunities for species to return to the borough.
- 1.4 Natural Woking explores how we can all do things differently – individually and together – to make a difference to our places and people, habitats and the species which live here. It establishes seven guiding principles which the Council works to:
 - Living spaces - restore and expand habitats for priority species enhancing the links between these (reducing fragmentation).
 - Access - build a publicly accessible, ecologically sensitive, strategic network of open spaces, green and waterways, especially to and from our urban centres.
 - Urban life - adapt and increase biodiversity and green space in our urban centres and surrounds (as well as in villages and the countryside).
 - Productive places - make the most of our buildings, streets, watercourses and landscapes, taking opportunities for multifunctional use and capitalising on all funding sources.
 - Responsive - protect natural resources, proactively adapt to the direct and indirect changes in climate and population, ensure appropriate estate management and support new development.
 - Wild about Woking - promote knowledge of the value and beauty of all faces of Woking borough's natural environment (town and countryside) and the benefits of getting involved, as a responsible individual, a community group or a business (green economy).
 - Legacy - protect and strengthen the resilience of the green infrastructure network and biodiversity, now and for future generations to enjoy.

1.5 Delivery against the Woking 2050 and Natural Woking strategies is monitored through regular reporting to the Climate Change Working Group whose members include representatives from the community, business, environmental organisations, councillors and council officers. The cross political party group was established in March 2003. It is a non-public meeting however notes of topics covered are published on the Council's website at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-change-working-group. A wide range of projects have and are being delivered in implementation of the objectives of Woking 2050 and Natural Woking, by the Council, by partner organisations and groups. More information about these at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability. This earlier work provides a strong foundation on which the Council is building as it takes additional steps in light of the urgency of the climate challenge for Woking borough as for local authorities everywhere.

2.0 Declaration and Climate Emergency Action Plan

2.1 On 25 July 2019, the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. This cross-party declaration recognised the continued priority and commitment the borough gives to addressing climate change, both through mitigation and adaptation. The Council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations.

2.2 By definition, the Council's own estate and operations covers all owned assets to reflect the responsibility and influence it has in terms of the carbon footprint associated with all buildings in its ownership. This includes:

- any Council owned properties that are outside of the borough
- buildings that are owned by the Council but are used by other organisations
- Council owned housing properties, managed by New Vision Homes.

2.3 A baseline year of 2018/2019 was adopted against which progress will be measured.

2.4 Further to the declaration, a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) was drafted and approved by the Climate Change Working Group at its meeting on 3 December 2019 and by Council on 13 February 2020. This is available on the Council's website at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-emergency-action-plan. The plan highlights and acknowledges this is a continuation of the long term commitment of the Council to protecting the environment and addressing climate change. It highlights activities that are already underway and introduces new actions.

2.5 Given the breadth of the pledge to reduce (and eventually eliminate) the Council's own impact and contribution to climate change, the plan is naturally broad ranging. Crucially, it acknowledges the need to accelerate existing Woking 2050 activities in order to meet the pledge. To initiate the plan it was agreed to progress a series of priority actions for implementation in 2020/21.

2.6 The plan has been categorised into target areas of action:

- our assets (council corporate and leased) – energy and waste
- transport
- policy, leadership and behaviour changes
- sustainable development
- adaptation, ecology and habitats.

2.7 At its meeting on 12 March 2020, the Climate Change Working Group received its first update on progress made against priority actions for 2020/21. This and subsequent updates are available on the Council's website under the climate change pages

(www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-emergency-action-plan).

2.8 The latest published update of the CEAP is that taken to the Climate Change Working Group on 25 November 2020, available in Appendix 2. At the time of writing, a further update is tabled for discussion at the Working Group’s next meeting on 18 March 2021.

2.9 Each update shows the progress made against the priority actions and is a reflection of the cumulative work undertaken since the declaration. To reflect the ongoing nature and continuing importance of these actions, these priorities will be rolled forward for 2021/22 and the wider action plan will continue to be a live document that evolves, in consultation with the Climate Change Working Group as appropriate, as actions and priorities come forward.

3.0 Activities undertaken to date (post July 2019)

3.1 A number of key activities and projects have been progressed post-declaration. These activities build on a strong foundation of green initiatives that pre-date July 2019 which are recorded on the Council’s website here: www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/green-initiatives.

3.2 As stated in section 2, each CEAP update shows progress against the priority actions. The nature of the declaration is such that many activities are cross-service and involve inter-departmental working. All Council activities and services have an important part to play in reducing its overall climate impact. This is reflected in the themes of Woking 2050 and the CEAP. However, for ease of reference a summary of Woking Borough Council (WBC) activities post July 2019 is included below (please refer to Appendix 2 for full details).

Theme	Activity
Our assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018/19 baseline adopted. • Greenhouse Gas reporting for 2019/20 shows 11% reduction on 2018/19 levels. • Display Energy Certificates renewed for Civic Offices and Monument Way. • Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) confirmed for the three largest buildings owned and leased out by WBC (Dukes Court, Export House and Orion Gate). • Large Scale Renewable Energy Plan drafted for consideration by the Climate Change Working Group at its meeting on 18 March 2021. • Boiler replacement at Woking Leisure Centre in November 2020. • Colleagues from Joint Waste Solutions are working to establish a process for monitoring emissions from Surrey councils’ waste services for the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP). The monitoring will take account of energy and water consumption from buildings associated with waste collection activities as well as fuel consumption from waste collection vehicles. A proposed methodology was presented to the SEP Members’ Group Meeting at the end of February 2021.

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<p>Transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBC participating in an on-street electric vehicle charging project in partnership with SCC. • Chobham Road pedestrian/cycle bridge.
<p>Policy, leadership and behaviour changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planet Woking launched (see section 5 of this report for details) including standalone website; social media communications; two online talks; and relaunch of Natural Woking newsletter to incorporate all climate change, sustainability and biodiversity news. • Over £9m awarded by the Government to Action Surrey for the delivery of the Green Jump Surrey project to enhance household energy efficiency improvements across the county. As at the end of January 2021, 528 eligible households have been identified, of which 462 are proceeding to survey and installation; 124 pre-installation EPCs completed to confirm eligibility; 7 residents received 9 measures -1 park home installation, 1 Q-Bot underfloor insulation, 2 cavity wall insulations and 5 loft insulations completed. • Internal audit of energy management and utilities completed. • Single Use Plastics Policy adopted in July 2019 and WBC support confirmed for the Plastic Free Woking project coordinated through Woking Environment Action. • To mark the first anniversary of Refill Woking, Refill West Byfleet was launched in September 2019. The whole network has over 30 Town Centre and five village partners including local cafes, restaurants, shops and retail outlets, that offer a water bottle refill service free of charge (outside of lockdown restrictions). The scheme encourages the reduction of single use plastic bottles. Meanwhile, work is in hand to provide water bottle filling stations in key locations.
<p>Sustainable development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping exercise of the Council’s current planning policies, how they align with its climate emergency declaration, what they cover and what gaps might exist, has been undertaken by officers in Planning Policy and is being finalised. This piece of work will help identify any opportunities for further developing planning policy or guidance to help deliver the Council’s declaration and how best they could be achieved, particularly for the next iteration of the Core Strategy.

<p>Adaptation, ecology and habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Crested Newt Project is now in its fourth year. Further habitat improvements were completed at Westfield Common in January and February 2020, in addition to the complementary conservation work of local volunteers, guided by Surrey Wildlife Trust, in line with the wider management plan for the Common. • Rain garden close to completion at Alpha Road – the second in a pilot of raingardens to assist in the alleviation of surface water flooding. • Sutton Green Flood Alleviation scheme. • Tree veteranisation at Woking Park in February 2020 to maintain the diversity of a small woodland by creating the habitat needed to sustain a number of important insects, fungi and wildlife. • Additional management works implemented in some of the Council’s most sensitive countryside greenspaces, including an uplift in conservation works for our rare heathland assets. • Ongoing support to Woking Peregrine Project, now in its fifth year. • Swift, bat and town twinning sign installed in Woking Town Centre (opened in August 2019), other habitat features also installed on nearby buildings. • Ivy wall installed in the High Street (April 2019) and Dukes Court living green wall (completed 2020). • Growing number of conservation volunteering and community gardening projects, led by local residents and supported by the Council and our environmental partner Serco.
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4.0 Partnership working and collaboration

- 4.1 Many activities and projects continue to be made possible through working together with key stakeholders, commercial partners and volunteer organisations to meet our common environmental goals. These activities are key to achieving carbon neutrality both across the council estate and borough-wide.
- 4.2 Our continuing collaboration with ThamesWey and Action Surrey is highlighted in projects listed in section 3 and the CEAP updates. Such projects are central to decarbonising corporate energy supplies (e.g. Poole Road Energy Centre) and engaging residents in the take up of energy efficiency measures (e.g. Green Jump Surrey) and the reduction of the borough’s domestic carbon footprint. Action Surrey provides an impartial energy advice service through which Surrey residents can access a network of trusted, local and experienced installers for various energy saving measures, such as loft insulation, cavity and

solid wall insulation, energy efficient boilers, LED lighting, solar panels and more. As well as improving household energy efficiency, their services assist in tackling local fuel poverty.

- 4.3 Another significant partner in progressing community focused climate and ecological activities is Woking Environment Action (WeAct). WeAct works to tackle global environmental concerns on a local scale, encouraging sustainable living and working in the Woking area, helping residents, businesses and organisations to make a positive difference to our local environment. The group's work also contributes towards delivery of the Woking 2050 and Natural Woking strategies. Woking Borough Council supports their projects and they are represented on its Climate Change Working Group to help progress our action plans and key objectives.
- 4.4 Organisations such as the Surrey Heathland Partnership and Surrey Wildlife Trust are also essential to the valuable management work being undertaken, in partnership with the Council, to protect our local habitats and species in furtherance of our ecological commitments.
- 4.5 Since March 2020, officers from all districts and boroughs in Surrey, plus the County Council, have convened monthly through virtual meetings of the Surrey Climate Change Officers' Group. This has now come to replace the previous grouping known as the Surrey Energy and Sustainability Partnership and has proven to be a useful way of sharing knowledge in order to advance our common climate change goals. All local authorities within this group have formally acknowledged the climate situation and need for urgent action.
- 4.6 Further examples of Woking Borough Council working collaboratively with authorities across Surrey on sustainability issues are listed in section 3 and the CEAP.

5.0 Planet Woking

- 5.1 As outlined in section 3, work continues on the Planet Woking programme. Its purpose is three-fold:
 - To share what the Council has been doing to date to address climate change and sustainability locally;
 - To raise awareness about what the Council is doing to meet its carbon neutral targets; and to
 - Inspire local people to get involved and make, or continue to make, changes to live a greener, more sustainable life and gather their feedback for new project ideas.
- 5.2 Key Planet Woking activities since its launch on 24 September 2020:
 - Standalone website launched at www.planetwoking.co.uk
 - Communications through the dedicated Facebook and Instagram accounts.
 - Hosted two well-received online events as part of a programme of themed talks aimed at residents, schools and businesses. The first event was centred around what individuals can do to improve sustainability at home; the second celebrated the great outdoors and the need to balance access to and enjoyment of our natural habitats and wildlife, with a need to ensure we protect our local biodiversity for its own sake and so that future generations can enjoy it too. For both topics audiences enjoyed a series of presentations given by expert guest speakers. Each online talk is followed by an open discussion during which viewers have the opportunity to share their own experiences of living greener; to ask panellists and Council representatives questions. These discussion sessions have proved to be a great forum through which to gather ideas to

later share through Planet Woking. Recordings of the webinars are available via the Planet Woking website for those that were not able to view the live event.

- First two of a series of informative video shorts highlighting local environmental work, available to view at www.planetwoking.co.uk.
- A growing set of community focused case studies inspired by local individuals and groups published to the Get Involved section of the Planet Woking website.
- In October 2020, the Natural Woking newsletter was relaunched as a Planet Woking newsletter which carries all the latest climate change, sustainability and biodiversity project updates. This now has a circulation of circa 600 readers. New subscribers can sign up to the newsletter at www.planetwoking.co.uk/get-involved/newsletters/
- The Council’s website has been updated with a direct link to the Planet Woking website from the [climate change pages](#).
- Full page features in the winter 2020 and spring 2021 editions of the Woking Magazine. The Magazine is circulated to all households in the Borough and available online [here](#).

5.3 Section 6 details how Planet Woking will continue into 2021 plus further ideas for its future beyond July 2021 which marks the end of the initial funded project.

6.0 Future Plans

6.1 The CEAP provides a framework for identifying continuing and future actions. As discussed in section 2, many current priorities will continue into the next financial year to reflect their ongoing nature. Of these, key activities to highlight for 2021/22 include:

Activity	Outputs
Large scale renewable energy plan	At the time of writing the draft plan was tabled for discussion at a meeting of the Climate Change Working Group on 18 March 2021. The Plan suggests a range of actions to facilitate next steps towards achieving greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy. If supported the actions will be added to the wider CEAP. Governance and monitoring of this Plan will be conducted through the Climate Change Working Group.
Remainder of Planet Woking programme until July 2021	The current programme continues until July 2021 during which time communications and engagement will continue to further raise the profile of what the Council and its partners are doing locally to address the climate and ecological declaration. Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two further themed webinars; • regular communications and engagement through social media; • possible Planet Woking sponsored community

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	<p>engagement activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued expansion of case studies and resources on the Planet Woking website.
Future of Planet Woking	<p>At the time of writing a paper is tabled for discussion at a meeting of the Climate Change Working Group on 18 March 2021. The paper puts forward a plan for the future of Planet Woking beyond July 2021 when the initial funded project closes. Although Planet Woking will remain an established brand and framework through which the Council can continue to promote and share its climate change and sustainability projects, the paper explores possible options for its lasting profile and growth.</p>
Climate change e-learning	<p>SCC is working with online learning providers Learning Pool to create a new e-learning tool to facilitate learning around climate change and sustainability. The tool will be available for use by Councillors, officers and it may be possible to adapt it for use by the public. SCC has agreed to make it available for use by districts and boroughs. It is hoped that the tool can be incorporated into WBC's existing e-learning provision. WBC officers are also exploring another potential source for additional complementary sustainability training, provided by a third party.</p>
Engaging with the business community	<p>Officers from the Green Infrastructure team have joined the Woking Chamber of Commerce's Environment Committee. This will be a good opportunity to raise the profile of the climate and ecological emergency declaration and how the business community can assist and also continue to improve their own sustainability practices.</p> <p>Planet Woking is a sponsor of the CREST 21 awards, which promote the positive work by businesses based in the Woking area to protect the environment and promote more sustainable working and lifestyle habits. The awards will take place on 20 May 2021 and are being organised by Woking News and Mail in collaboration with the University of Surrey.</p>
Connection of Poole Road Energy Centre	<p>The energy centre is due to be completed in spring 2021. It will supply energy to the new Hilton Hotel, retail stores and residential towers at Victoria Square.</p> <p>ThamesWey is also planning to connect Export House and Midas House to the new district heating and cooling networks to further decarbonise local energy supplies. The connection will be supplemented with some internal retrofit works to the buildings to improve energy efficiency.</p>
Future engagement through the Residents Panel	<p>Further opportunities to raise awareness and strengthen community understanding and engagement with the borough's climate emergency declaration may be available through the Residents Panel which is to launch early in 2021. The Panel will provide people who live in the borough with ongoing opportunities to shape the borough's future, by acting as a</p>

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	sounding board for future initiatives.
SCC study into local delivery on climate change	SCC has contracted Leeds and Surrey Universities to identify priority actions for local delivery against climate targets. The study will consider sectoral emissions (e.g. transport, housing, commercial and industry), renewable energy generation opportunities. Importantly, it will help identify quantifiable carbon reductions and programmes and identify proxies for tangible measurement of projects across the county on baseline emissions. Outputs of the study are anticipated in March 2021 and will be shared with districts and boroughs. The outputs will have significant value in helping to measure progress against local climate and ecological commitments.
Water supplier procurement exercise	The objective is to streamline to a single water supplier for WBC by the beginning on the next financial year 1 April 2021. This will help improve monitoring of water consumption across the corporate estate.
Modelling of district heating networks	<p>In collaboration with consultants WSP, ThamesWey is conducting hydraulic and techno-economic modelling of the district heating networks in Woking Town Centre. The hydraulic modelling seeks to understand the size of network extension necessary to supply new Town Centre developments from Poole Road, with an added scenario of creating an interconnection between this new network and the existing network supplied from Victoria Way. This interconnection would significantly aid the decarbonisation of buildings connected to this network by reducing the network temperatures, leading to an increase in both the efficiency and range of renewable heating technologies that could be utilised.</p> <p>The techno-economic modelling will consider the different blends of heating technologies to use, which will deliver the best outcomes in terms of efficiency, emissions, diversity, cost and other variables over the next 25 years. This will inform ThamesWey's selection of plant equipment to bolster capacity at Poole Road, which will supply the new Town Centre developments as they come through.</p>
Woking Great Crested Newt Pilot	The Council has made a long-term commitment to the delivery and maintenance of habitat improvements to benefit this protected species, whilst at the same offering developers a more streamlined process for schemes that could impact great crested newts (GCN). Improved habitats will be maintained and further opportunities sought, informed by learning from the first five years of this pilot project and from that nationally gathered via project partner Natural England's wider roll out of the GCN 'district level licencing' approach.
Supporting biodiversity through day to day service and project delivery	The Council and its partners - including ThamesWey, New Vision Homes, and Serco – continue to expand practices that support biodiversity. For example new development schemes featuring swift bricks (supporting the Woking Swifts project), green walls and green roofs, SuDs ponds/rainwater gardens, and suitable tree and landscaping planting selections.

	Also continuing support for the successful conservation of peregrine falcons in Woking Town Centre (the Woking Peregrine Project).
Wildflowers	Continuing work to expand the area of publicly owned/managed land used to grow wildflowers and/or allow grass to grow taller, whilst ensuring we maintain an attractive, cared for appearance throughout the Woking area. Residents' preferences on grass cutting vary, hence a balance is sought in our management regimes whilst still increase wildflowers/long grass year on year.
Wild About Woking	Every opportunity will continue to be taken to share news and inspire further efforts to support species and their habitats. For example through the Council's and others publications, social media, newsletters, events, responding to enquiries from the public, and through our ongoing support to community groups and individual residents undertaking conservation volunteering and wildlife friendly community gardening.
Environment Bill and other national changes	Officers are maintaining a watching brief as the Environment Bill reaches an advanced stage and the Council will take all steps necessary to meet the requirements of the Bill and to help others to do so. The Bill will, at the earliest this autumn, bring into UK law environmental protections and recovery. Changes on the horizon include the proposed introduction of a mandatory 'biodiversity net gain' on new developments and conservation covenants.

6.2 These planned activities during the 2021/22 financial year will continue to help meet our goal. The most significant of which in terms of reducing carbon will be those linked to decarbonising energy supplies.

6.3 However, momentum against the CEAP will need to be maintained and further progressed in order to reach zero carbon within nine years. This will require continued collaborative working plus the identification of external and innovative funding mechanisms at a time of increasing financial pressures.

7.0 Implications

Financial

7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this update report, however delivery of the CEAP will require an ongoing financial commitment by the Council.

Human Resource/Training and Development

7.2 There are no human resources or training implications associated with this update report, however future provision for sustainability training is being explored as referenced in section 6.

Community Safety

- 7.3 There are no community safety implications associated with this update report. However, it is accepted that a changing climate will affect residents through more extreme weather events bringing impacts such as heightened flood risks and heat waves. The steps being taken to address the climate and ecological emergency will assist in mitigating and adapting to these impacts.

Risk Management

- 7.4 There are no risk management implications associated with this update report. However, as recognised through the cross-party declaration, the climate and ecological emergency requires urgency and sustained action in order to address the inevitable impacts of climate change.

Sustainability

- 7.5 The activities outlined in this update report progress the commitments the Council has made in respect of its climate and ecological declaration and zero carbon pledge.

Equalities

- 7.6 There are no equalities implications associated with this update report.

Safeguarding

- 7.7 There are no safeguarding implications associated with this update report.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The Council has long been committed to protecting the environment. The climate and ecological emergency declaration made in July 2019 affirmed the Council's continuing commitment in this regard.
- 8.2 The foundations were already established in terms of Woking 2050, setting out a vision guiding our collective efforts to create a sustainable borough by reducing our impact on the environment and how as a Council we can lead by example. However, to achieve carbon neutrality, it was recognised that accelerated action is required to eliminate the Council's contribution to climate change completely.
- 8.3 Work has been undertaken to identify what the declaration means to the Council and more broadly across the borough in terms of establishing clear baselines and definitions.
- 8.4 The declaration requires carbon neutrality across the Council's estate and operations by 2030. The CEAP provides a framework for identifying, progressing and monitoring actions in furtherance of this commitment. Much work has been undertaken to date and examples have been highlighted in this report.
- 8.5 The planned activities for the 2021/22 financial year will continue to help us to meet our goal. The most significant of which are those linked to decarbonising energy supplies.
- 8.6 However, there is no doubt that zero carbon will be challenging within nine remaining years. Momentum against the CEAP will need to be maintained and further progressed. This will require continued collaborative working plus the identification of external innovative funding mechanisms at a time of increasing financial pressures.

REPORT ENDS

Climate Change and Sustainability Timeline

The list below highlights some key activities undertaken across WBC's estate since 1990/1991.

1990/1991	The Council embarks on programme of energy efficiency works across its own estate
1994	Woking Environment Action (formerly called Woking Local Action 21) established
1997/1998	Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and first phase of solar panels installed at Brockhill
February 1999	Thameswey Ltd established
July 1999	Thameswey Energy Ltd established
2001	Second phase of solar panels installed at Brockhill
2001	Awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise
March 2001	Woking CHP Energy Station officially opened
December 2002	Climate Change Strategy adopted
2003	Climate Neutral Development Guidance adopted
March 2003	Cross political party Climate Change Working Group established
June 2003	Woking Park Fuel Cell / CHP officially opened
June 2005	Updated Climate Change Strategy adopted
June 2005	First demonstration hybrolight commissioned

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March 2005	Awarded the Beacon Council Status for Sustainable Energy
December 2005	Awarded Low Carbon Leaders' Award
2006	First electric vehicle (EV) charging points installed in town centre car parks
March 2006	Energy Saving Trust fleet health check
Autumn 2006	Enterprise Rent A Car Ltd car club introduced for Council business mileage
March 2007	Awarded Beacon Status for Promoting Sustainable Communities through the Planning Process
2008	Revised Climate Change Strategy adopted
2008/2009	Beacon Council Status for Tackling Climate Change
2008/2009	The Council enters partnership with Enterprise Rent A Car Ltd to deliver a car club for business mileage reducing emissions and saving money on mileage claims
2008 to 2011	Cycle Woking programme delivered
2009	Action Surrey created as part of the Thamesway Group to give impartial energy advice to households, schools and businesses helping them save money and reduce CO2 emissions
March 2012	Environmental audit conducted by Cap Gemini
2012/2013	Expansion of electric vehicle charging points in town Centre car parks (ongoing)
December 2013	Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted by Council.
March to August 2015	Electric vehicle pilot as part of the Council's car club arrangements

September 2015	Woking 2050 , revised Climate Change Strategy adopted
January/February 2018	Air quality monitoring tubes installed on Victoria Way at the junction with Lockfield Drive (at the former Toys R Us building, and at Victoria Arch junction)
Spring 2018	Plastic water bottles removed from Council Chamber meetings, china cups and glasses replaced plastic and paper cups in all meeting rooms. Segregated waste bins, including food waste, introduced into staff kitchens in Civic Offices.
October 2018	Diesel vehicles banned from the Council's lease car fleet
2018/2019	New Vision Homes (NVH) invested £5.7m into the existing housing stock as part of the asset management programme. £500,000 of which was focused on improving the energy efficiency of blocks through external wall, cavity wall and loft insulation programmes.
February 2019	Electric vehicle position statement adopted and published on website
April 2019	Thamesway's new energy centre on Poole Road received planning permission
July 2019	Single Use Plastics Policy adopted
July 2019	Climate emergency declared
September 2019	Minutes of the Climate Change Working Group added to the Council's website to enhance awareness of its activities in this area.
November 2019	Five trees planted at Byfleet Primary School to mark National Tree Week. The planting was part of Surrey County Council's initiative to plant 1.2 million trees in the county by 2030.
December 2019	Minutes of the Climate Change Working Group added to the Council's website to enhance awareness of its activities in this area.
February 2020	Carbon neutral definitions and baselines determined and adopted by Woking Borough Council along with the identification of priority carbon reduction activities for 2020 to 2021.
February 2020	Woking Borough confirmed as part of a Surrey County Council pilot to install on-street charging points. SCC was awarded £470,000 to install 80 fast on-street charging points for electric vehicles across Woking,

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Spelthorne, Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils during 2020 to 2021.

March 2020	Seven trees planted on Surrey County Council highway land adjacent to Horsell Lodge to mark Surrey Tree Week.
March 2020	Minutes of the Climate Change Working Group added to the Council's website to enhance awareness its activities in this area.
March 2020 onwards	Activities post March 2020 are captured within CEAP updates which are available on the Council's website at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-emergency-action-plan . The latest update is available in Appendix 2 for ease of reference.

Climate Emergency Action Plan – Update Report
(Climate Change Working Group, 25 November 2020)

Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update 3

This document summarises progress against the priority actions within the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), as reported to the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) in November 2020.

Background information about the CEAP can be found [here](#).

Theme / Priority Action	Progress to November 2020
Council assets	
<p>Adopt an emissions baseline for the Council’s estate and operations.</p>	<p>As part of its climate and ecological declaration, the Council agreed 2018/19 as its baseline year for emissions monitoring.</p> <p>As previously reported, the Council’s 2018/19 Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) submission shows that the total energy consumption for corporate buildings owned and used by the Council was 18,638,896 kilowatt hours (kWh) equating to 5,006 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂). New Vision Homes (NVH) residential properties recorded a footprint of 2,555 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (CO₂e) in 2018/19.</p> <p>The Council’s climate emergency declaration uses a definition that also includes all properties that are owned and leased out to other organisations. The Council owns over 550 such leased properties. As reported previously, due to the scale of the portfolio, determining the energy consumption and carbon footprint of these buildings needs to be conducted in a phased approach.</p> <p>As reported in September 2020, the energy consumption and EPC ratings for the top three largest leased buildings owned by the Council - Dukes Court, Export House and Orion Gate have been determined. Officers will identify the next steps as part of this ongoing review as well as determining which buildings should be looked at next.</p>
<p>Collaborative work with ThamesWey to deliver on carbon reduction goals e.g. decarbonising the energy supply for all Council buildings and</p>	<p>Action Surrey – part of the ThamesWey Group – was successful in its consortium bid on behalf of the majority of Surrey districts and boroughs under the BEIS Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme and</p>

<p>operations and eliminate emissions directly through the supply of renewable / sustainable power sources.</p>	<p>was awarded £6.2 million. The project – named Green Jump Surrey - seeks to upgrade the energy efficiency of low income, fuel poor households across the county. BEIS has since launched a subsequent Phase 1B of the GHG LAD scheme and Action Surrey is exploring submitting a second bid to allow homes with an EPC D rating to be included (Phase 1a covers homes below a C rating). Action Surrey is also engaging with the Greater South East Energy Hub regarding further Phase 2 funding which is anticipated to become available in March 2021. Action Surrey gives a full report on this scheme elsewhere on the Working Group’s agenda.</p> <p>Works continue on the Poole Road Energy Centre as does the modelling study with consultants WSP of the district heating networks in Woking Town Centre, as reported in September’s update.</p>
<p>Improve the energy performance of Council owned and leased properties – initially through an appraisal of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Display Energy Certificates (DECs).</p>	<p>Due to the scale of the property portfolio, Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are being reviewed in a phased approach, beginning with the largest three leased properties. Of these, Dukes Court and Orion Gate are C rated. Export House however has an EPC rating of E. The accompanying EPC report lists possible remedial actions required to uplift this rating which will be reviewed. Officers will identify the next steps as part of this ongoing review as well as determining which buildings should be looked at next.</p> <p>Display Energy Certificates (DECs) for publicly accessible Council buildings will also be reviewed in a phased approach, beginning with that of the Civic Offices and Monument Way. Energy efficiency consultancy, BSSEC, has been contracted to undertake these initial DEC assessments on 19 November 2020. The DECs and accompanying reports will give an up to date view of the energy efficiency of these buildings with recommendations as to how they can be further improved to reach at least a C rating, if required. The results will be shared with the Working Group and revised certificates uploaded to the Council’s DEC webpages here. Officers are also liaising with Freedom Leisure regarding DECs for the Leisure Centre and Pool.</p> <p>As reported at the last meeting, the boilers at the Leisure Centre were due to be replaced by late October 2020 to improve energy efficiency. These were</p>

	<p>delayed due to difficulties in sourcing materials for the metal flues but are due to be completed mid-November 2020.</p>
<p>Large scale renewable energy plan to be drafted, detailing how wind energy could be funded across the Borough and how it could be complemented with solar energy.</p>	<p>This was agreed by the CCWG as a new priority action at its meeting on 12 March 2020. Work has begun on preparing an initial high level renewable energy strategy.</p> <p>On 17 November 2020, the Government announced its Ten Point Plan to push the UK towards net-zero emissions by 2050, which will be backed by £12bn investment and aim to create 250,000 new green jobs. The Plan includes a target for 40GW of offshore wind power by 2030; an aim to generate 5GW of “low-carbon” hydrogen production capacity by 2030; and 30,000 hectares of tree planting each year.</p>
<p>Transport</p>	
<p>Avoid unnecessary travel to meetings where possible and develop a mandatory transport hierarchy as part of the Council's Staff Transport Plan.</p>	<p>Due to circumstances in the spring and prevailing restrictions, levels of staff travel (to and for work) and flexible working have changed markedly. Social distancing requirements have seen the majority of staff working from home and the use of Zoom for meetings.</p>
<p>Identify locations for the installation of electric bike charging points to further enable staff (and public) to select sustainable modes of transport and alternatives to the car, particularly for short journeys.</p>	<p>This was agreed by the CCWG as a new priority action at its meeting on 12 March 2020. Initial contact has been made with e-bike charging companies to identify potential solutions. Suitable locations and best-fit products are to be identified.</p>
<p>Work with the Council's car club provider to replace the existing petrol cars with electric vehicles.</p>	<p>Existing car club arrangements for business mileage are being reviewed to secure improved environmental criteria and availability / efficiency.</p> <p>Officers from Green Infrastructure (GI) have been in discussion with SCC about the feasibility of joining the countywide car club scheme. This could bring benefits including: a greater number of cars available for business and public use; improved environmental criteria including targets for EVs on the fleet; flexibility in pick up and drop off locations. SCC is in the process of finalising its contract after which GI officers can review contract terms and better assess cost and service implications for the Council.</p>

Policy, leadership and behaviour changes	
Review Woking 2050 to incorporate the Council's pledge for carbon neutrality and climate emergency action plan.	This has in part been addressed with the identification of priority actions as per this plan and the subsequent updates on these. Climate Emergency Action Plan updates are available on the Council's website under the climate change pages here . To be further progressed by officers in the coming months to reflect the adopted pledge and call for accelerated action and timeframes.
Develop an engaging staff communication programme to promote and raise awareness of what the Council is doing to address climate change across its estate and operations (and more broadly across the Borough).	<p>Officers have been continuing to promote what the Council is doing to address climate change.</p> <p>Work continues on the Planet Woking programme. The purpose of the programme is to raise the profile of what the Council has been doing to date to address climate change and sustainability locally; its climate and ecological emergency declaration; and current /future projects.</p> <p>At the heart of the programme is the involvement of the local community to inspire local residents to make, or continue to make, changes to live a greener, more sustainable home and work life.</p> <p>On 20 October 2020, Planet Woking held its first virtual event, focusing on the theme "Home". 75 Eventbrite registrations were received with 49 residents joining the webinar online to find out how making changes to everyday activities at home can contribute to a sustainable Borough.</p> <p>The talk was chaired by Cllr Kevin Davis with an introduction by the Leader of the Council, Cllr Ayesha Azad. We were joined by guest speakers Jen Gale, author of The Sustainable(ish) Living Guide, and Wendy Wakenshaw, Woking resident and founder of the Imperfect Footprints website, who gave inspiring presentations and shared tips and advice on sustainable living. Further information about the speakers is available on their websites - www.asustainablelife.co.uk and www.imperfectfootprints.co.uk. Their presentation slides are available on the Planet Woking website at www.planetwoking.co.uk/get-involved/home-is-where-the-heart-is along with a recording of the online talk at www.planetwoking.co.uk/events/home-event.</p>

Following the presentations, 23 webinar viewers stayed online for a discussion, sharing their own experiences of living greener and asking the panellists questions. It proved a great forum through which to gather ideas to later share through Planet Woking. Officers from Green Infrastructure are now working with two residents to produce case studies on home energy efficiency and installing a home living/green wall. These will be uploaded to the website soon.

Planning will soon begin for the next online event which will take place on Tuesday 2 February 2021 and will focus on the theme 'The Great Outdoors'. A synopsis of the event is available [here](#).

Air Social continues to promote Planet Woking through Facebook and Instagram. Monthly content plans for social media campaigns and messaging are generated. Since launching, Planet Woking has reached over 60,000 local accounts and appeared in 335,361 newsfeeds. Social media adverts have generated over 2,000 clicks during this time, which ranges from users visiting the website, visiting the Facebook page and engaging with content. A further 85 newsletter sign-ups have also been generated. The Planet Woking Facebook page has to date (9 November) had 331 total likes and 445 page views. The Instagram account has reached 56,833 accounts; generated 270,456 impressions and 1,792 clicks through to content. The Council's Green Infrastructure service officially relaunched its Natural Woking newsletter in October as a Planet Woking newsletter which carries all the latest climate change, sustainability and biodiversity project updates. The Natural Woking newsletter had amassed a distribution list of 462, so together with the additional sign ups generated from the Planet Woking website to date, the newsletter now has a circulation of 547.

The Council's website has been updated with a direct link to the Planet Woking website from the [climate change pages](#).

	<p>The winter edition of the Woking Magazine was published at the end of October 2020 featuring a full page article about Planet Woking. The Magazine is circulated to all households in the Borough and is available online here.</p> <p>Woking Borough Council is highlighted in an article by the South East Climate Alliance (SECA) as one of just a few councils in the South East communicating well on climate change. Planet Woking is cited. The article is available here: https://seclimatealliance.uk/council-communication/. Officers from Green Infrastructure will be contacting the SECA to further share what the Council has been doing to address climate change locally.</p> <p>On 12 November 2020, Woking Environmental Action held its AGM. Cllr Kevin Davis attended to give an overview of the Planet Woking programme and to answer audience questions.</p>
<p>Develop a staff and councillor communications campaign to promote and encourage positive behaviour changes that focus on messages around switching off equipment, avoiding single use plastics, etc.</p>	<p>Communications to staff and councillors to promote and raise awareness of the pledge to become carbon neutral will continue over the coming weeks and months. This has in part been addressed with messages arising through projects as noted above.</p> <p>Officers are working on ideas to continue to promote awareness, particularly through the Planet Woking programme. Officers in the Green Infrastructure team now have a Planet Woking email signature signposting to the standalone website.</p> <p>Covid-19 and prevailing restrictions around social distancing have naturally seen a significant reduction in the number of officers and councillors in the office environment, with many largely based at home.</p>
<p>Sustainable development</p>	
<p>Further develop planning guidance to reflect the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration.</p>	<p>A draft scoping exercise of the Council's current planning policies, how they align with its climate emergency declaration, what they cover and what gaps might exist, is being undertaken by officers in Planning Policy. This piece of work will help identify opportunities for further developing planning policy or</p>

	<p>guidance to help deliver the Council's declaration and how best they could be achieved, particularly for the next iteration of the Core Strategy.</p>
<p>Work with Planning Policy service to update local guidance to reflect how development can be adapted to encourage the adoption of low or zero carbon technologies. Develop planning guidance for developers and homeowners regarding the installation of technologies such as ground and air source heat pumps etc.</p>	<p>Currently, developers applying for planning permission for new homes need to demonstrate that schemes go beyond the Building Regulations minimum requirements (a minimum of a 19% improvement), and incorporate climate adaptation measures. Planning guidance in the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) encourages developers to go even further towards zero carbon housing if viable and technically feasible.</p> <p>Once complete, the Working Group will be consulted on the findings of the scoping exercise referenced above.</p>

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2021

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

Each year, the Chairman of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee prepares a report outlining the activities undertaken by the Committee. This year, the Committee has reviewed a wide range of topics and has completed both scrutiny and pre-decision scrutiny of the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. The three Task Groups of the Committee – the Economic Development, Finance and Housing Task Groups – have continued to monitor and review these three core areas of the Council's activities.

The Work Programme of the Committee is regularly reviewed and updated to take account of issues affecting the Borough at the time.

The Committee is now invited to agree the draft report for submission to the next meeting of Council, on 8 April 2021.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be submitted to the next meeting of Council subject to any comments made by Members of the Committee.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Councillor D Hughes, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Email: cllrdeborah.hughes@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person: Councillor D Hughes, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Email: cllrdeborah.hughes@woking.gov.uk

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Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is wide-ranging and includes a variety of areas for consideration that have been reviewed over the past year. These included areas such as the finance of major developments; internal scrutiny of Council processes; review of joint ventures and partnerships; contractual performance as well as various updates, such as progress on the Sheerwater development.
- 1.2 The past work of the Committee was challenged in November by the Peer Review, their full report is yet awaited. It was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needed to be more robust in its challenge and to be able to demonstrate clear actions and changes which have come from its discussions. This Committee have taken this criticism on board and this report attempts to demonstrate where actions and changes have been forthcoming.
- 1.3 The Committee at various points were reminded of the Committee's terms of reference - the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responsible for examining all functions and responsibilities of the Council. The Committee would ensure that the Council delivers its key aims and objectives, by creating an open, transparent mechanism for Councillor's to shape, question, evaluate and challenge the Council policies, decisions and performance.
- 1.4 Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the committee remained unchanged and its meetings have all been virtual over the year. The usual update of training has not happened, however the Committee membership has been consistent for the majority of the period with only one change of the 9 member committee.

2.0 Summary of Work Undertaken

2.1 Areas brought forward from the 2019/20 municipal Year;

- Freedom leisure – A follow up from the scrutiny work conducted by this committee has not been conducted as the Leisure Centre has been closed for long periods this year. Therefore any repeat survey of residents on use and perceptions of the service would not have been fair or appropriate. This follow up will be taken forwards to the work programme of 2021/22 once the services have had chance to resume normal working.
 - A request was received from the Housing Task Group for this committee to look at the lack of affordable housing in the Borough. As this was deemed to be a major topic it was agreed that it would be the primary focus of the O&S for scrutiny in this year.
 - Safer Working Partnership and the Community Safety plan will come to the next municipal year plan, this again has been impacted due to the pandemic.
 - The outcome and report of the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments.
 - Follow up on the Council's Play area provision/ strategy and renovation framework, the updated refurbishment and renovation programme to come back to the Committee.
 - Follow up on the Joint Waste Solutions and the performance of Amey on the waste contract.
 - Follow up from the change in the children's centres and the formation of the family centres.
- 2.2 Every effort was made to ensure that the Committee was working with the forward plan for the Council to ensure forward scrutiny of decisions.

3.0 Areas identified for Scrutiny

3.1 Woking Football Club and Associated Developments

3.2 This was the major piece of scrutiny work conducted by a task and finish group from O&S, but the report and recommendations were delayed due to the cancellation of the March 2020 committee.

3.3 The rationale for the scrutiny by this committee are as follows; 'The proposed developments at both Kingfield/ Westfield and on the Egley Road are major projects which have been subject to many debates in the Council and in the Executive. They were also subject to a petition submitted by local residents to the Council. This Task Group seeks to assure the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (and therefore the Council and residents) that appropriate due process has been applied'.

3.4 The scrutiny was undertaken in the main by the task group in several ways. It interviewed key witnesses, both internal council officers and external stakeholders; it reviewed the contracts, development agreement; over 100 references relating to the project; it had minuted meetings and concluded with a report of its findings which was taken to the full O&S committee for agreement and consent to take through to Council.

3.5 The Task group report found gross failings in the governance of the project by the Council.

3.6 The report initially had to be divided into two documents. The Part 1 document consisted of a summary of the findings of the task group and its initial 16 recommendations. The Part 2 of the report was the main body of the report and was kept confidential as it contained some commercially sensitive information. This report in redacted form was released for public scrutiny in November 2020. The O&S committee has asked for these redactions to be removed and this is still pending.

3.7 Actions from this scrutiny; and outputs

- The report in two parts. Discussion by O&S of the findings and recommendations to proceed to Council by O&S.
- Council in June accepted the paper and all of the recommendations which included the final recommendation for a further independent review into the processes and decisions of the council in respect to this development.
- The Independent review was conducted by Dr Gifty Edila in Nov/Dec 2020 and her report was published at Christmas. This report not only endorsed the task group report she went further, for example;
 1. Legal implications for proposals should be included; and the legal powers on which agreements have been reached be included in Council and Executive reports.
 2. All major projects should have a completed risk assessment, which should be supported by contingency plans for the mitigation of those risks.
 3. Legal Services should seek Lexcel accreditation from the Law Society of England and Wales.
 4. Recommendation for the Council to set up a resident panel to facilitate regular consultation with residents.

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5. Part 2 confidential information in reports dealing with development projects should be limited to information that should not be in the public domain at that point in time and should not apply to the entire report.
 6. WBC to consider amending the Ostensible Authority arrangement.
 7. Where a Special Purpose Vehicle company is used to deliver a project a risk template should be produced particularly addressing viability and identifiable risks.
 8. On the purchase of land by the Borough, Dr Edila is clear that a valuation should be sought to assist councillors in making a prudent decision on the purchase.
 9. The Council should avoid appointing statutory officers, especially the Section 151 officers onto external companies or trust with whom the council has or is likely to have an association.
 10. External training for Officers and Councillors on the Nolan Principles.
 11. The O&S committee should have a reasonable budget and also be allocated a part time scrutiny officer to assist with our work.
- This independent report was brought to Special Council for discussion on 7th January. The Council agreed to accept the recommendations in full from the independent reviewer, and rejected an alternative report on the same submitted by the Chief Executive. She praised the work of the task group, stating that the group had 'performed expeditiously with admirable skill in reviewing the project. They identified important matters that needed attention'. She expressed surprise at the 'lack of a business case, project plan and risk template for a project of this size', and the lack of resource made available to support this committee in its function.
 - O&S conducted a review of all aspects in the report which suggested improvements in its function.
 - O&S have submitted suggestions for inclusion into the new scrutiny officer job description to the Chief Executive following the February meeting.
 - This item will need to come back for review post implementation of the recommendations in the next year.
 - Full disclosure of the whole of the task group report following a lifting of the redactions.

3.8 Housing Scrutiny

- 3.9 This was planned to be the major item for the committee for this municipal year. It was conducted over several meetings;
1. Housing; Current position
 2. Housing; Delivery
 3. Housing; Future Housing Strategy
- 3.10 The area which kept coming up in these meetings was the affordable housing provision and the use by developers, including the council of the viability argument. The Committee probed particularly around the issue of affordable housing provision, an area where the council is not meeting its annual targets. It sought to understand the issue, to investigate the perceptions around developers 'getting out of' providing affordables to the number required by the council

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in the core strategy. It transpired that only 19% of affordable were implemented via a section 106. The need to consider alternative ways of providing affordable homes was discussed.

- 3.11 The use of the viability argument turned out to be a major item as this seemed to be the reason why so few affordable homes were being delivered particularly in the town centre as the high cost of land mean that the inclusion of affordable units are deemed not to be financially viable for developers. Concern was raised on what are the implications for future affordable housing on brownfield sites, particularly in the town centre. It was stated to the case study group that the higher the building the more proportionately expensive the building is to build and this will make it difficult to include affordable housing in future high rise developments!
- 3.12 In order to look at this in more detail a small case study group was set up. This looked at 3 different examples of where the viability argument had been used. This met 3 times and had input from WBC Planning Department, the Planning Policy Manager and one of the external companies that are commissioned by the Council to advise on the implementation and relevance of the viability assessments as provided by developers etc it provided a report which was incorporated into the summary scrutiny paper for consideration by council.
- 3.13 The poor provision of affordable units in the town centre is likely to be considered further in the awaited Town Centre Strategy.

3.14 Action and outputs:

Recommendations from this scrutiny were;

- (i) The locally set commuted sum formula to be reviewed when the Affordable Housing SPD is next updated,
- (ii) The Borough should set the example and seek to bring forward more of its own sites for affordable housing developments.
- (iii) Where a viability case results in fewer affordable homes being secured, a S106 agreement in order to provide the option for the actual costs and values to be validated.
- (iv) A town centre strategy to be brought forwards in consultation with residents on the nature of new build in this area to inform future policy.
- (v) Increased vigour and support to the return of empty homes into occupation.
- (vi) That the Planning Committee has a session in viability assessment process in their regular update training.

Outputs and actions were;

1. A briefing for members on the viability argument given by Kempton Carr Croft was provided for all councillors following this. This is to be a regular training in future for members of the Planning committee.
2. A report from the Case Study Group on the use of the viability argument by developers.
3. A report following this scrutiny topic was presented to O&S in February. This focussed on the areas where recommendation can support a forthcoming Housing Strategy, areas for discussion on planning policy and the link toe Health and Wellbeing.

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4. The Committee determined that the Housing paper go back to the Housing Task Group prior to going to Council.

3.15 Joint Waste Solutions; Performance update.

- 3.16 This was a follow up from the presentation and discussions last year where issues of an underlying dip in performance was not visible to members in the KPIs submitted in the Green Book.
- 3.17 The Covid 19 pandemic has had huge impact on this service over the past year, but the service has been successful in maintaining an effective refuse collection service, and indeed one is which there have been less residents' concerns identified.
- 3.18 Areas of concern identified last year have been addressed, namely the availability of vehicles due to a more proactive maintenance process and reciprocal agreements with other similar organisations. The issues of staffing also appears to have been improved.
- 3.19 The service has continued in its education and identification of areas of poor recycling around the Borough and has worked locally with residents, particularly those in flats with shared waste facilities. This has been shown to be effective and beneficial.
- 3.20 Areas where progress has not been made have been in the utilisation of new technologies to enable the increased recycling of waste that is not recycled at present.
- 3.21 Opportunities were identified for the inclusion of commercial waste from the town centre. This is apparently included within their contract but is not being utilised at present. Another opportunity area is the recycling of food waste from the councils own community centres.

3.22 Play Area Maintenance

- 3.23 This has naturally been adversely impacted over the pandemic with play areas and MUGA's closed for long periods. The team has continued to make its inspections and routine maintenance.
- 3.24 A play strategy and a planned framework for refurbishment of our 42 play areas which was anticipated last year has not been forthcoming. However some play areas have had new equipment and replacement of worn out features. The committee continue to be concerned at the 25 year cycle of refurbishment as being too long and not being responsive to changes in need and climate change.
- 3.25 The committee was pleased to see the plans for a complete planned refurbishment of a play areas in Loop Road which will take on the concerns of residents who petitioned for a disabled accessible and friendly play area. This is out for public consultation.
- 3.26 Concern was raised that due to the council's financial position the future funding for further improvements is unclear.

3.27 Joint Waste Solutions and Amey

- 3.28 The JWS team presented the data regarding performance of AMEY over the past year. Issues in performance were apparent at the end of last year and the committee sought assurance that these were being addressed. The key areas of concern were staff and vehicle capacity, both of which the members were informed are being expanded. Members discussed the present provision against their understanding of the initial contract.

3.29 Actions:

- Cllr Davis as Portfolio holder offered to review the KPIs which are presented on this performance in the green book. This is following comments that the deteriorating quarter 3 and 4 position were not picked up by the present indicators. It was suggested that a review of these KPIs be undertaken so that in future any issues can be identified and picked up by members via this route.
- Enhanced communication and education from JWS for residents over their recycling offer.
- Update on expanded provisions for other areas of recycling as discussed to come back to the committee.

3.30 Community Infra Structure Levy. (CIL)

- 3.31 This item was scheduled for scrutiny on 23rd of March as this meeting was cancelled it was discussed in this year.
- 3.32 The concern was that the CIL monies available to communities was not being utilised and the suggestion was that the process was not clear and cumbersome.
- 3.33 We had a robust discussion on the issues with Ernest Amoako our Planning Strategy Manager and worked with him on suggestions for improving clarity and stimulating increased use of these funds in future.
- 3.34 At the time of the meeting there was £4,543,832 CIL monies available for use in the local communities.

Actions;

1. Paper written by O&S to the Woking Joint Committee where decisions on the application of CIL are addressed. This included recommendations for a more streamlined process including the setting up of a sub group to consider consent to CIL proposals on a more regular basis.
2. Chair of O&S spoke to this paper at the Joint Committee.
3. Virtually all the recommendations of O&S were accepted and have now been implemented, including a more streamlined flow chart of the process.

3.35 Serco, Performance review

- 3.36 This looked at the performance of Serco who are contracted to undertake planned work works in the Borough under environmental contracts of grounds and trees. They demonstrated a flexible approach over the pandemic. Stated that their staff capacity was adequate to meet the needs of the contract.
- 3.37 The committee asked questions and were assured via the responses.
- 3.38 Items not included in this report but on the March agenda are the follow up from the Family Centre review and a piece on Climate Change, asking the question of what progress the council has made on this since declaring a climate change emergency.

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4.0 For Overview;

4.1 Celebrate Woking; this was deferred this year as all municipal events were cancelled due to the pandemic.

4.2 Complaints, consideration of trends. This saw a large increase of 17.5% in the number of complaints under the heading of 'other'. It was felt that the committee could not evaluate any trends within this such large category which was responsible for 50% of the complaints. A request was made for a more defined breakdown if possible.

4.3 FOI requests. The report showed a drop in requests being submitted by 17%. The numbers of FOIs that breached the recommended time frame had increased to 11% from 3% the previous year. This was attributed to staff being diverted to cope with the challenges of the Covid pandemic. The numbers of FOI requests that were refused had dramatically reduced from 9% to only 2% in the period. Again it was difficult to evaluate any trends and a request that the report should at least mention those FOI's in summary form that had gone onto the Ombudsman should be included next year for completeness of the report.

4.4 Update on the progress of the Sheerwater project. Building has now commenced and the recreation facilities are due to be opened in the summer. 46% of the new homes in this development are due to be at affordable/social rents.

4.5 Surrey Police and Youth Support. Detective Inspector Dave Bentley presented and took questions from the committee. He covered 5 main points in the public health approach; 1. Population 2. Partnership 3. Prevention 4. Data and evidence bases 5. Cause of causes. It was explained that there is an emphasis on early intervention, and increase in partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. The impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences was also highlighted. A preventative and proactive approach is being followed in addressing issues in this area.

4.6 Youth Service Provision. WBC Youth Development Manager, Sandie Bolger presented on this and highlighted the impact of Covid 19 on this. The impact on the mental health of young people and the inability for groups to meet has been damaging. The Youth team has continued to do as much as possible working remotely with young people and has worked with other stakeholders such as the ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) who also presented to O&S. The impact on youth employment was explored, and an expanded youth provision focussing on supporting 18-24 year olds back to employment is anticipated. An increased provision for the 'Friday night project' with an additional evening is also anticipated once the Leisure centre is able to reopen.

4.7 Anti-Social Behaviour. Detective Inspector Dave Bentley presented an update to the committee on incidents throughout the borough. He asked that residents should continue to report incidents. He announced that there was to be an uplift in Neighbourhood resources, and demonstrated the close links that the team have with the Community Safety Team at WBC. He emphasised the Public Health Approach to Policing Document, which highlights the need to identify and work on the root causes, such as poor mental health and deprivation. WBC have updated their ASB policy in line with recent legislation, with an updated guide to support residents providing a clear path for their concerns.

4.8 Outstanding actions

1. A list of empty homes by ward was agreed for sharing confidentially to ward councillors.
2. The publication of the full part 2 WFC&AD task group report.
3. Safer Working Partnership and the Community Safety

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4. Update of the Joint Waste Solutions KPIs in the Green Book
5. Job Description for the new scrutiny officer to come back to committee for information.
6. A section on the Victoria Square to be included in the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, the 'green book' was agreed in the previous year, in the same way as Sheerwater is reported. This has not been forthcoming. Details of the Victoria Square development are discussed regularly in the Victoria Square Oversight Group.

5.0 Financial Scrutiny and Overview

- 5.1 This was conducted throughout the year via a review of the Green Book and presentation of the Mid-Year Treasury management report to the committee. More detailed review was conducted via the Finance task group.

6.0 Pre scrutiny

6.1 Corporate Peer Challenge

- 6.2 This was put on the agenda following the verbal feedback from the LGA team in November 2019 which indicated areas in which the O&S committee could improve.
- 6.3 The O&S committee had been concerned that this report was produced in December 2019 and not seen by all members until June. The CE apologised for the delay in the release of this document.
- 6.4 The Committee was asked by the Chief Executive (CE) to pre scrutinise a paper that he planned to present to the Executive on the LGA report following their Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2019.
- 6.5 This pre scrutiny was conducted at a few days' notice for submission to the Executive and was contributed to by the committee within the meeting and afterwards.
- 6.6 The O&S pre-scrutiny paper highlighted significant differences in the LGA recommendations and those of the CE to be presented to the Executive for decision. Both the O&S pre scrutiny paper and the CE paper were submitted to the Executive for discussion and decision.
- 6.7 It is of grave concern that the requested pre scrutiny paper was not presented, nor discussed in the Executive as is the statutory right of papers from this committee.

Actions.

1. The pre scrutiny paper was attached to the minutes of the next O&S for reference
2. A decision was made that no pre scrutiny request would be accepted at such short notice in future. Not only did this create a huge amount of work for O&S, but the Executive members also did not have chance to read the document.
3. Representations were submitted following the Executive committee citing the concern at how this item was managed, and the failure to permit the presentation or discussion on the O&S paper.
4. A request that the LGA team revisit and attend O&S one year post their original visit was declined by officers.

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7.0 Membership

- 7.1 The Constitution permits membership of 10 councillors. The membership this year has been 9: Councillor D Hughes (Chairman), Councillor M Whitehand (Vice-Chairman), Councillor J Bond, Councillor G Chrystie, Councillor S Hussain, Councillor R Mohammed, Councillor M Raja, Councillor C Rana and Councillor J Sanderson.
- 7.2 Following a change of Council Leader, Cllr Rana was moved and Cllr Bittleston joined the Committee in December.
- 7.3 Subjects for the agenda have arisen from the Chairman and Vice Chairman, from resident concern, plus from fellow members and Committee members. The attendance record for the Members of the Committee is set out at Appendix 1.
- 7.4 As last year an additional meeting was included from the original advance dates, this was held in December so the committee will have met formally 9 times this year.

8.0 Task Groups

- 8.1 Scrutiny of the Council's activities often takes place in task groups. There are three standing task groups which come under the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- Economic Development Task Group (Chairman Councillor I Johnson)
 - Finance Task Group, (Chairman Councillor K Davis)
 - Housing Task Group and Economic Development Task Group (Councillor I Johnson)
- 8.2 The fourth was an ad hoc task and finish group, this completed its work in March 2020, but is included in this paper as its report and recommendations were not considered until this municipal year;
- Woking Football Club & Associated Developments Task Group (Chairman Councillor D Hughes)
- 8.3 Appendix 2 contains the makeup of the task groups, recently updated remits and summary reports on the task groups activities and discussions throughout the year that have been regularly reported to the Committee.
- 8.4 A Case Study group met three times to support the work of the O&S committee on the Housing Scrutiny topic. They looked specifically at the use of the viability argument in the delivery of affordable homes. This was led by Cllr Whitehand and produced a report which contributed to the housing scrutiny paper which summarised the committee's findings.
- 8.5 A group was also formed led by Cllr Sanderson following up on a request from the Executive for O&S to consider the Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership and the role of WBC. This has reported back to the committee, and its conclusions are due to come to the July 2021 meeting.

9.0 Further Areas of Scrutiny

- 9.1 The main subjects are shown in 2 above. In addition, the Committee monitors financial and other indicators in the "Green book" which is a monthly set of management information and also looks at the treasury mid-year review. Over the year it was discussed as to how effective the O&S committee meetings were in monitoring the financial performance. It was decided that the emphasis of this would be within the Finance Task Group. Whilst the O&S committee would focus on the monitoring and review of the non-financial performance.

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 9.2 Over the past year areas for follow up and future review have been noted on a forward plan as a suggestion for further deliberation by the committee (appendix 3). This includes area where a review of implementation and actions are required for assurance. It is also recommended that the next committee ensure that areas of scrutiny already conducted are followed up to ensure that implementation of recommendations are robust and fit for purpose, providing the openness and transparency that all expect.
- 9.3 It has not been possible to include all the topics referred for Overview and Scrutiny in the year due to pressure of time. However these are included in the suggested forward plan.

10 Acknowledgements

- 10.1 The task group contributions are vital to the work of the Committee. The three standing task groups continue to provide review and scrutiny into topics which both come directly from Overview and Scrutiny and also from within their direct Terms of Reference. The review of the terms of reference of the three task groups was a piece of good housekeeping, ensuring that the value of these groups was being appropriately picked up in O&S. The question was raised as to whether the reporting to O&S was still relevant. Taking national guidance into account the three task groups now have a defined scrutiny function within their TOR and hence O&S is still the most relevant report to committee. The role of the task groups will be to take areas from O&S and look at them in more detail, reporting back, in a cycle of scrutiny and review.
- 10.2 Support from Officers to the Committee has been outstanding, particular thanks to Hanna Taylor, Gareth John and Joanne McIntosh.
- 10.3 The Committee has looked into a wide range of topics and has taken an in-depth approach to several of these. This has meant that guests have been asked to attend on several occasions to present and answer questions. The Committee are grateful to all of the guests who have been open and clear when responding to questions and providing information for scrutiny and information.
- 10.4 Thanks to the cross party support for this important Committee and contributions from all members. The committee is small and the additional work of the task groups, the case study group and the group who looked into the SLLP were all conducted by committee members. There have also been several examples of reports and work that continued beyond the committee where members were asked to contribute opinion and subject matter to reports.
- 10.5 Also to those portfolio holders who have generously attended to support and add insight into areas within their influence.
- 10.6 Finally, a particular thanks to Cllr Melanie Whitehand who ably supported the Chair and the committee as Vice Chair over this year.

11 Conclusions

- 11.1 This Committee has made a huge contribution to the enhancement of governance of the Council in its processes and actions going forwards. It has not shied away from asking the difficult questions and investigating detail. The Committee has provided robust scrutiny and challenge in areas which will result in permanent change in Council processes particularly in project management, due diligence and providing a documented audit trail of decision making in the future.

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21

Date	Committee Members in Attendance	
15 June 2020	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr G Chrystie Cllr S Hussain	Cllr R Mohammed Cllr M I Raja Cllr C Rana Cllr Sanderson
13 July 2020	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr G Chrystie Cllr S Hussain	Cllr R Mohammed Cllr C Rana Cllr Sanderson
14 September 2020	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr G Chrystie Cllr S Hussain	Cllr R Mohammed Cllr M I Raja Cllr C Rana Cllr Sanderson
19 October 2020	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr G Chrystie Cllr S Hussain	Cllr M I Raja Cllr C Rana Cllr Sanderson
23 November 2020	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr G Chrystie Cllr S Hussain	Cllr M I Raja Cllr C Rana Cllr Sanderson
21 December 2020	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr D Bittleston Cllr G Chrystie	Cllr S Hussain Cllr R Mohammed Cllr M I Raja Cllr Sanderson
25 January 2021	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr G Chrystie	Cllr S Hussain Cllr M I Raja Cllr Sanderson
22 February 2021	Cllr D Hughes (Ch) Cllr M Whitehand (V-Ch) Cllr J Bond Cllr D Bittleston Cllr G Chrystie	Cllr S Hussain Cllr R Mohammed Cllr M I Raja Cllr Sanderson

Reports of the Task Groups

Housing Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Ian Johnson

Purpose	Membership
<p>The Task Group covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steer development, and monitor implementation, of strategies and policies to provide, in particular, affordable housing availability (based on housing needs), reduction of homelessness, improving housing conditions, management and maintenance of Council homes and linkages with social care provision. • Monitor performance and the delivery of key housing projects. • Any other topics are to be considered as suggested by the task group, officers or other council bodies. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer matters to the task group for further scrutiny and consideration and vice versa. <p>This is a standing task group.</p>	<p>Councillor Tahir Aziz Councillor Mary Bridgeman Councillor Will Forster Councillor Debbie Harlow Councillor Ian Johnson Councillor Rashid Mohammed Councillor Melanie Whitehand</p>

Annual summary of the Housing Task Group:

Covid-19

Following the knock-on effects of Covid-19, the first meeting of the task group was cancelled. Once able to meet again the group received an update on the arrangements made and the activities undertaken by the Housing Service in light of the pandemic. It had been a challenging time for the service, with government directions on the provision of accommodation for rough sleepers coinciding with the closure of most hotels in the UK. Working with York Road Project the Council secured space at Woking Hotel and Travelodge, along with the conversion of the HG Wells centre with bedroom pods. At the time of the meeting there were 33 rough sleepers in these spaces.

Housing Policies / Strategy

The Housing policies were under review and the team had focused on the Housing Strategy which was last produced in 2011. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a large piece of scrutiny on Housing in the 2020/21 municipal year. The group noted the paper relating to the comments by Overview and Scrutiny on the working draft of the Housing Strategy. Where appropriate housing related matters were being taken into account, such as dealing with empty homes as quickly as possible, while others, such as town centre strategy were more appropriate for consideration by the planning team. The planning department would have sight of all the recommendations. In due course the Housing Strategy would be going to Full Council for approval.

New Vision Homes

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The annual report of New Vision Homes showed they had clearly gone to great lengths to support tenants despite changes in management and a high turnover of staff. Overall performance had been maintained, including estate inspections and property repairs. There had been calls to vulnerable tenants which had generated excellent feedback and tenant engagement continued. The sustainment of tenancies remains a key objective. NVH noted the significant collaborative and flexible work with WBC especially with the challenges faced in recent months.

NVH were working well in the final year of their contract while TSG (gas contractor) had struggled with staff illnesses and had only been able to carry out emergency repairs. An independent consultant had been engaged to review the 20+ contracts of NVH in anticipation of migration of the housing management service to WBC in 2022.

Affordable Housing

The task group had consistently reviewed the progress on the provision of affordable housing throughout the year. Sheerwater and Broadoaks would start to come on stream in the coming year along with other schemes scheduled further into the future.

The task group was pleased to note the successful bid for funding under the government's Next Steps Accommodation programme and congratulated colleagues for their work.

Selective Licensing

Covid-19 had impacted the inspection of properties within the Selective Licensing scheme. Nevertheless, a number of properties had been visited and improvements made. Questionnaires to tenants were being issued to better assess performance of the scheme.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the task group were due for update. A draft was reviewed and it was agreed that subject to a few points it would be passed to CMG and then on to O/S in accordance with the usual procedure.

Moving Forward

In the coming municipal year, the group will continue to review work on the Housing Strategy, monitor the tendering process for NVH contracts and begin to assess the performance and future of the Licensing Scheme. The task group recognised the enormous contribution by the housing team to support residents at these most difficult of times.

Economic Development Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Ian Johnson

Purpose	Membership
<p>To promote a thriving and growing local economy in Woking, while ensuring that residents, community groups and businesses feature in a high quality environment that continues to be an attractive and healthy place to live in, work in and visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">To review and monitor the current Economic Strategy of the Council.	<p>Councillor Mohammad Ali Councillor Ayesha Azad Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Councillor John Bond Councillor Kevin Davis Councillor Gary Elson</p>

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer matters to the task group for further scrutiny and consideration and vice versa.	Councillor Ian Johnson
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Annual summary of the Economic Development Task Group:

The Task Group first reviewed the Framework for Recovery document, the purpose of which was to identify the issues and challenges presented by Covid-19 to the Borough's commercial centres as lockdown is relaxed by Government and to prioritise objectives. The Framework had been drafted with the assistance of Simon Matthews Associates who had been involved in the preparation of the Council's Economic Development Strategy and had been submitted to the Executive.

The Framework identified the following main objectives:

1. Introduction of measures to create a safe environment and ensuring through marketing and PR that people are made aware
2. Restoration of consumer/customer foot-flow to the commercial centres as soon as possible
3. Encourage Borough-based employees to transition back to pre-Covid workplaces
4. Identification and support to the business community, with particular focus on SME's at risk
5. Engage and build capacity across key internal and external stakeholders
6. Planning for the stages of crisis through to recovery.

The physical state, involving cleanliness and signage of the town centre public realm, had been a key aspect of work by the Neighbourhood Services team and Serco, while Environmental Services had been advising businesses on safe restarts. The Finance and Business Rates departments have worked miracles in getting government grants to firms in a timely fashion.

By linking all the aspects of the aims of the different stages of the Framework through from Crisis to Recovery, Woking's investment in the town centre provides an opportunity to look beyond Covid-19 to how the town might need to adjust the offer in light of the enormous increase in online shopping and the impact on traditional high streets.

The staff have been extremely busy supporting business in difficult circumstances and as they recover from the immediate crisis, thought needs to be targeted towards the future, to maintain resilience and at the same time create a destination where people want to live and work.

The task group reviewed the updated version of the Framework for Recover again in October, prior to the latest restrictions. The Business Liaison team's activity was focused on the action plan to reopen the economy following lockdown, providing good communications with business and the public and managing the public realm to enable the local economy to open successfully and safely.

Messaging campaigns through "Love Local" as an extension to #WeAreWoking "we are open" to encourage people back into Woking, along with a re-enforcing health message were all designed to promote a post-lockdown Woking. This marketing material was used on social media and in public spaces, car parks, Woking Magazine and Woking News & Mail.

Help was provided to business via the Woking Works website, which gave guidance on reopening, with support from a number of local firms, one to one business support and promotion of services provided by Surrey Chambers and Woking Chamber of Commerce. A number of webinars were produced with guest presenter, including Cllr Kevin Davis as portfolio holder in one case, which were well attended. Other Council teams who were busy providing advice included Environmental Health who had advised 130 businesses, particularly in respect of social distancing such as at supermarkets.

These efforts were showing some signs of success as footfall slowly improved though judging by car park ticketing was still nearly 50% down in September over 2019. A great deal of effort had been put

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

into creating a positive and safe environment throughout the town centre, including in privately controlled premises.

In these challenging times these firms have done Woking, and themselves, proud and deserve congratulations on their successes.

The Finance Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Kevin Davis

Purpose	Membership
<p>The Task Group has been established as a Standing Task Group to review financial issues as identified either by itself or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task Group will receive financial information, including reports to the Executive, to enable it to undertake effective scrutiny of the financial performance of the Council.</p> <p>The Task Group will receive reports on areas such as Treasury Management, Budget Process and Financial Forecast, Statement of Accounts, Investment Programme, Review of Fees and Charges, General Fund Budget, Update on Commercial Rents, Update on Irrecoverable Debt, and matters arising from the Green Book. Its Work Programme will be received at each Task Group meeting.</p>	<p>Councillor Simon Ashall Councillor Ayesha Azad Councillor Tahir Aziz Councillor John Bond Councillor Kevin Davis Councillor Deborah Hughes Councillor James Sanderson</p>

Annual summary of the Finance Task Group:

Throughout the year the task group had discussed and reviewed the following items:

The sale of Midas House sale to SCC had fallen through, but the group were pleased to note that existing tenants were still engaged and paying rents.

The auditors had taken a very long time to approve last years' accounts, and whilst the group had expressed its disappointment at the delay, it's pleased that progress is being made.

The Victoria Square financial modelling, which would be effected by Covid-19 and was suggested that a new model is developed and was followed by a member briefing and report to Council.

The Finance Task Group had considered the 2020/21 financial position, and the approach to budget setting for 2021/22. The financial impact in 2020/21 has been across a number of areas of the Council's budgets:

- Revenue expenditure in dealing with the response
- Some savings as activities have slowed down
- Income loss from fees and charges and commercial rents
- Government support grants
- Cost and timing of capital projects

Even with the known current situation it remained very difficult to forecast for rest of the year as position continues to change. The task group had shared a summary note on the Council's financial position due to the concerns raised from the Covid-19 pandemic. The note covered the following topics:

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Additional costs in the Housing and Leisure sectors, as well as equipment for employees to work from home and also provision of PPE.
- Savings as some activities have slowed down eg Celebrate Woking, the extent of this is currently being established to ensure cost variations are savings and not a rescheduling of costs.
- Income Loss – such as commercial rents and on/off street parking.
- Government Support provided.
- Financial Forecasting.
- Management Action - The Council has reviewed staffing costs and has taken a number of posts out of the establishment, therefore securing savings for 2020/21 as reported in the Green Book, and will be incorporated in the 2021/22 budget.

Work Programme for 2021/22

Decision to be Taken	Proposed by	Officer Comment
Safer Woking Partnership – Community Safety Plan. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gave local authorities responsibility for considering crime and disorder matters. In 2010 the Committee agreed that the Safer Woking Partnership Plan would be brought forward annually for scrutiny.	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	It was scheduled to be viewed at the meeting on 23 March 2020, which was cancelled due to the Covid outbreak.
Investment Strategy. To understand the Council’s position on funding for projects and schemes such as the Flood Alleviation Plan, due to Covid-19.	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be carried over into the 2021/22 municipal year.
Freedom Leisure. For the Committee to receive an annual review and an update since the 2019/20 review.	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be carried over into the 2021/22 municipal year.
Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership. For the Committee to receive an update on the planned projects and activates at the Lakeview Community Centre in June 2021.	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be review at a meeting near in June 2021.

Annual Items of the Committee

Item	Month Scheduled	Reporting Officer
JWS Management Performance	January	Sarah Beck
Annual FOI report Annual Overview of Complaints Report	February	Hanna Taylor Jo McIntosh
Safer Working Partnership – Community Plan Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	March	Camilla Edmiston Chairman of the OS Cttee
Celebrate Woking Review and Forward Plan Treasury Management Mid-Year Review	November	Chris Norrington / Riette Thomas Leigh Clarke



WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny

Work Programme

CIVIC OFFICES
GLOUCESTER SQUARE
WOKING GU21 6YL
01483 755855
www.woking.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION TO WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

This Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is published with the purpose of assisting the Council in its overview and scrutiny role. The Work Programme covers the following areas:

- Items for consideration at future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- An extract from the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan.
- Any Scrutiny Review Topics proposed by Members of the Council for inclusion on the Work Programme.
- Any topics identified for pre-decision scrutiny.
- Details of the current Task Groups under the Committee's remit.

The Work Programme is designed to assist the Council with its overview and scrutiny role by providing Members with an indication of the current workload, subjects to be considered for review and items which the Executive expects to consider at its future meetings, so that matters can be raised beforehand and/or consultations undertaken with a Member of the Executive prior to the relevant meeting.

The Committee

Chairman: Councillor D E Hughes

Vice-Chairman: Councillor M Whitehand

Councillor D Bittleston

Councillor S Hussain

Councillor J Bond

Councillor R Mohammed

Councillor G G Chrystie

Councillor M I Raja

Councillor J R Sanderson

2020/21 Committee Dates

- 15 June 2020
- 13 July 2020
- 14 September 2020
- 19 October 2020
- 23 November 2020
- 21 December 2020
- 25 January 2021
- 22 February 2021
- 22 March 2021

Suggested Additions to the Work Programme

Decision to be Taken	Proposed by	Officer Comment
<p>Safer Working Partnership – Community Safety Plan. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gave local authorities responsibility for considering crime and disorder matters. In 2010 the Committee agreed that the Safer Working Partnership Plan would be brought forward annually for scrutiny.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	It was scheduled to be viewed at the meeting on 23 March 2020, which was cancelled due to the Covid outbreak.
<p>Investment Strategy. To understand the Council's position on funding for projects and schemes such as the Flood Alleviation Plan, due to Covid-19.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be carried over into the 2021/22 municipal year.
<p>Freedom Leisure. For the Committee to receive an annual review and an update since the 2019/20 review.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be carried over into the 2021/22 municipal year.
<p>Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership. For the Committee to receive an update on the planned projects and activities at the Lakeview Community Centre in June 2021.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be reviewed at a meeting near in June 2021.

Annual Items of the Committee

Item	Month Scheduled	Reporting Officer
JWS Management Performance	January	Sarah Beck
Annual FOI report Annual Overview of Complaints Report	February	Hanna Taylor Jo McIntosh
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Celebrate Woking Review and Forward Plan Treasury Management Mid-Year Review	November	Chris Norrington / Riette Thomas Leigh Clarke

Latest Version of the Forward Plan

The Forward Plan gives an indication of the decision to be taken by the Executive. Published monthly, the Forward Plan has traditionally given an indication of the decisions to be taken over the following four months.

25 March 2021

Key Decision	Subject	Decision to be taken	Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)	Background Documents	Contact Officer
No	Notice of Motion - Cllr I Johnson - York Road Project	To consider the Notice of Motion from Cllr I Johnson referred to the Executive on 25 March 2021 by Council on 11 February 2021.	Cllr Harlow, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Housing (Louise Strongitharm)
No	Notice of Motion - Cllr L Lyons - Paperless meetings	To consider the Notice of Motion from Cllr L S Lyons referred to the Executive on 25 March 2021 by Council on 11 February 2021.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council and Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)
No	Notice of Motion - Cllr L Lyons - Woking Station Pedestrian Underpass	To consider the Notice of Motion from Cllr L Lyons referred to the Executive on 25 March 2021 by Council on 11 February 2021.	Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Neighbourhood Services (Geoff McManus)
No	Notice of Motion - Cllr L Lyons - Provision of Affordable Homes Onsite	To consider the Notice of Motion from Cllr L Lyons referred to the Executive on 25 March 2021 by Council on 11 February 2021.	Cllr Elson, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Deputy Chief Executive (Douglas J Spinks)

No	Notice of Motion - Cllr L Lyons - Construction Site Noise Limits	To consider the Notice of Motion from Cllr L Lyons referred to the Executive on 25 March 2021 by Council on 11 February 2021.	Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Neighbourhood Services (Geoff McManus)
Yes	Corporate Plan	To recommend to Council the adoption of the Corporate Plan.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Community Services (Julie Fisher)
Yes	Medium Term Financial Strategy	The decision is sought to set the framework for Officers to develop detailed proposals for consideration by the Council to ensure the medium term financial stability of the Council in the context of its objective to support growth and to maintain services for local people.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
Yes	Smarts Heath Road Woking Gymnastic Centre	To recommend to Council funding arrangements for the implementation of the approved scheme.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
Yes	Robin Hood	To recommend to Council the provision of Loan Finance to Rutland Woking for the development of the former Pub site for residential accommodation.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Deputy Chief Executive (Douglas J Spinks)

No	Update on Council Decisions following the Independent Investigation into the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments	To receive an update on Council Decisions following the Independent Investigation into the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)
Yes	Monument Way West Development Proposals	To authorise the framework which will include affordable housing and Woking Community Transport relocation.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
No	Height and Scale of New Buildings across Woking	Following Cllr Lyon's Notice of Motion at Council on 3 December 2020, the Executive to receive a report setting out existing guidance regarding height and scale of new buildings, along with the consequential impacts which may arise from any changes, with a view to updating the Design Supplementary Planning Document, if appropriate.	Cllr Elson, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Deputy Chief Executive (Douglas J Spinks)
Yes	Financing Affordable Housing	To consider alternative financial arrangements to secure the delivery of affordable homes.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council, Cllr Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder for Finance.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

No	Council Tax and Business Rate Debt Collection - Adoption of Council Tax Protocol	Following Cllr Aziz's Notice of Motion at Council on 3 December 2020, the Executive to receive a report considering the adoption of the CAB Protocol or similar regarding collection of unpaid Council Tax and Business Rate debt.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
No	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Annual Monitoring Report and IPSO Report	To receive details of RIPA authorisations during 2020 calendar year, and to receive the IPSO report and agree any necessary resulting actions.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)
No	Write off of Irrecoverable Debt	To write off debts over £10,000.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
No	Executive Undertakings - Woking Football Club (PLAN/2019/1176) and Egley Road (PLAN/2019/1177) Planning Applications	The Executive will be asked to consider agreeing to give effect to Section 106 planning obligations in respect of Planning Applications PLAN/2019/1177 and PLAN/2019/1176.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)
Yes	Old Woking Community Centre and Woking College	To consider varying the lease arrangements to enable Woking College to use part of the community centre facilities and to authorise extensions to the community centre to meet the needs of the community association and the College.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

No	Performance and Financial Monitoring Information	To consider the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information contained in the Green Book.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
Yes	Monument Way West Development Proposals	<p>To receive confidential information in respect of the Monument Way West Development Proposals in Part I of the agenda.</p> <p>(The press and public will be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item in view of the nature of the proceedings that, if members of the press and public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, to the Local Government Act 1972.)</p>	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<p>Yes</p>	<p>Development Agreement - New Central Extension</p>	<p>To authorise a development agreement.</p> <p>(The press and public will be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item in view of the nature of the proceedings that, if members of the press and public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, to the Local Government Act 1972.)</p>	<p>Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)</p>
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17 June 2021

Key Decision	Subject	Decision to be taken	Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)	Background Documents	Contact Officer
Yes	Woking Borough Council Digital Transformation Strategy	To recommend to Council the Woking Borough Council Digital Transformation Strategy.	Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Planning
No	Animal Welfare Policy	To recommend to Council an Animal Welfare Policy.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council, Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Julie Fisher)
No	Churchyard Closure and Transfer of Maintenance Responsibility – St Mary The Virgin Horsell	The Executive is requested to resolve that the responsibility for the maintenance of the closed churchyard at St Mary The Virgin Horsell is transferred to Woking Borough Council.	Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Neighbourhood Services (Geoff McManus)
No	Risk Management and Business Continuity Annual Report	To receive the annual report on Risk Management and Business Continuity.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Julie Fisher)
No	Performance and Financial Monitoring Information	To consider the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information contained in the Green Book.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)

No	Monitoring Reports - Projects	To provide quarterly reports on the progress of projects in the interests of financial prudence and corporate governance.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Julie Fisher)
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Current Task Groups Responsible to the Committee

The table below provides a list of current Task Groups established by the Committee, including an indication of the resource requirements and the anticipated completion date. Updates on the progress of individual Task Groups are included elsewhere on the Committee's agenda.

Task Group	Topic	Membership	Resources	Date Established	Anticipated Completion Date
Economic Development Task Group	<p>To promote a thriving and growing local economy in Woking, while ensuring that residents, community groups and businesses feature in a high quality environment that continues to be an attractive and healthy place to live in, work in and visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and monitor the current Economic Strategy of the Council. <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer matters to the task group for further scrutiny and consideration and vice versa.</p>	Cllrs Ali, Azad, Barker, Bond, Davis, Elson, and Johnson.	Officer and Councillor time.	11.03.09	Ongoing
Finance Task Group	<p>The Task Group has been established as a Standing Task Group to review financial issues as identified either by itself or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task Group will receive financial information, including reports to the Executive, to enable it to undertake effective scrutiny of the financial performance of the Council.</p> <p>The Task Group will receive reports on areas such as Treasury Management, Budget Process and Financial Forecast, Statement of Accounts, Investment Programme, Review of Fees and</p>	Cllrs Ashall, Azad, Aziz, Bond, Davis, Hughes, and Sanderson.	Officer and Councillor time.	25.05.06	Ongoing

	Charges, General Fund Budget, Update on Commercial Rents, Update on Irrecoverable Debt, and matters arising from the Green Book. Its Work Programme will be received at each Task Group meeting.				
Housing Task Group	<p>The Task Group covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steer development, and monitor implementation, of strategies and policies to provide, in particular, affordable housing availability (based on housing needs), reduction of homelessness, improving housing conditions, management and maintenance of Council homes and linkages with social care provision. Monitor performance and the delivery of key housing projects. Any other topics are to be considered as suggested by the task group, officers or other council bodies. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer matters to the task group for further scrutiny and consideration and vice versa. <p>This is a standing task group.</p>	Cllrs Aziz, Bridgeman, Forster, Harlow, Johnson, Kemp and Mohammad.	Officer and Councillor time.	25.05.06	Ongoing